

A
A
0
0
1
3
7
2
2
6
7
3



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



ISAAC FOOT

Charles White
5, AIRPORT AVENUE,
CHESHAM, W. 4.

CHESHAM 4267

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY

1891-1892





A LITTLE BOOK
OF
ENGLISH
PROSE

Selected and Arranged by

ANNIE BARNETT

//

*WITH A PORTRAIT
FROM A PAINTING
BY GODFREY KNELLER*

LONDON

METHUEN & CO

36 ESSEX STREET W.C.

MDCCCC

to

F. A. M.

FOR YOU THERE'S ROSEMARY AND RUE ; THESE KEEP
SEEMING AND SAVOUR ALL THE WINTER LONG :
GRACE AND REMEMBRANCE BE TO YOU BOTH,
AND WELCOME TO OUR SHEARING !

PREFACE

THE Editor of this Little Book has endeavoured to present the chosen passages as nearly as possible in the form in which they left the hands of their authors. Something, indeed, has been conceded to modern punctuation where the original seemed unduly misleading, but the spelling has been left as the authors themselves apparently intended it to be. Their seeming arbitrariness is often in truth compliance with strict rules, though possibly of the writer's own making; and when variety in spelling is no serious obstacle to ready apprehension, it is surely to be preferred to the uniformity founded on the pronunciation of the majority, with which we are threatened.

The explanatory notes that have been added are so few and so brief that they hardly need an apology; some readers will still perhaps find a few difficult words in the early part of the book, but the Editor has had in view chiefly those who will prefer by a little consideration of the context to find the key to a doubtful passage themselves, without any impertinent aids to reflection.

It will be noticed that two translations have been admitted, passages from Lord Berners' *Froissart* and Sir Thomas North's *Plutarch*. It has seemed a sufficient justification for their inclusion that they come from works of standard importance in the line of great English literature, from translations by men of letters into English which is both their own and significant.

The Introduction to this Little Book has been written by Joseph Addison, Esq., and will be found on page 135. Several readers may be expected to have different "relishes," and to no one can an anthology be so satisfying as to its compiler; but it is hoped that this one will be reasonably acceptable, and it may at least claim to be as truly representative of the progress of English prose writing as its small bulk permits.

ISLEWORTH,

July 1900.

SELECTIONS FROM

	Page
“The Buke of John Maundeuill”	1
Geoffrey Chaucer	10
William Caxton	11
Sir Thomas Mallory	14
Lord Berners	18
Sir Thomas More	21
Sir Thomas Elyot	23
Roger Ascham	25
Richard Hooker	29
Sir Philip Sidney	32
Sir Thomas North	37
Richard Hakluyt	40
Sir Walter Raleigh	44
William Shakespeare	48
Francis Bacon	53
John Donne	60
Robert Burton	64
John Selden	66
William Drummond of Hawthornden	69
Sir Thomas Browne	73
Izaak Walton	79
Thomas Fuller	82
Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon	87
John Milton	89
Jeremy Taylor	96
Abraham Cowley	102

	Page
John Bunyan	107
Sir William Temple	110
John Dryden	112
Robert South	116
Daniel Defoe	118
Jonathan Swift	122
Francis Atterbury	127
Richard Steele	129
Joseph Addison	134
Lady Mary Wortley Montague	140
Joseph Butler	142
Lord Chesterfield	143
Henry Fielding	145
Samuel Johnson	149
David Hume	156
Laurence Sterne	158
Thomas Gray	161
Horace Walpole	167
Oliver Goldsmith	170
Edmund Burke	176
William Cowper	182
Edward Gibbon	189
James Boswell	191
"Junius"	195
Samuel Rogers	198
Frances Burney	200
William Cobbett	202
Sir Walter Scott	205
Jane Austen	212
William Wordsworth	219
Samuel Taylor Coleridge	221
Robert Southey	228
Charles Lamb	231
William Hazlitt	239
Walter Savage Landor	247

	Page
Leigh Hunt	251
Thomas De Quincey	253
Thomas Love Peacock	261
Sir William Napier	263
Percy Bysshe Shelley	265
Thomas Carlyle	272
Thomas Babington Macaulay	276
John Henry Newman	284
George Borrow	289
Harriet Martineau	292
Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield	294
John Stuart Mill	296
Elizabeth Gaskell	299
William Makepeace Thackeray	302
John Bright	309
Charles Dickens	311
Richard William Church	319
Charlotte Brontë	322
Charles Kingsley	326
“ George Eliot ”	328
Matthew Arnold	331

A LITTLE BOOK OF ENGLISH PROSE

THE BUKE OF JOHN MAUNDEUILL

THE CENTRE OF THE WORLD

FOR it es the comoun worde that Jerusalem es in myddes of the erthe; and that may wele be proued thus. For, and a man thare take a spere and sett it euen in the erthe at midday, when the day and the nyght er bathe ylyke lang, it makez na schadowe till na party. And therfore I hafe oft tymes thocht on a tale that I herd, when I was yung, how a worthy man of oure cuntree went on a tyme for to see the werld, and he passed Inde and many iles beyonde Inde, and he went so lang by land and by see, enviroound the werld, that he fand ane ile, whare he herd men speke his awen langage. For he herd ane dryfe bestez sayand to them swilke wordes as he herd men say til oxen in his awen cuntree gangand at the plugh; of whilk he had grete meruaile, for he wist noyt how it myght be. Bot I suppose he had so lang went on land and on

see, enviounand the werld, that he was commen in to his awen marchez ;¹ and if he had passed forthermare, he schuld hafe commen euen to his awen cuntree. Bot for he herd that meruaile and myght get schipping na ferrere, he turned agayne as he come ; and so he had a grete trauaile. And it befell efterward that he went in to Norway ; and a tempest of wynd in the see drafe him, so that he arryued in ane ile. And when he was thare, he wist wele it was the ile in whilk he had bene before and herd his awen speche, as men drafe bestez.

OF DIAMONDS

I haue many tymes assaied and sene, that if a man take dyamaundes with a lytill of the roche² that thai growe on, so that thai be taken vp by the rutes and oft sythes³ wette with the dew of May, thai growe ilke a yere visibilly, so that the smale waxez grete, for right as the fyn perl congeleth and wexeth gret of the dew of heuene, right so doth the verray dyamand. And right as the perl of his owne kynde taketh roundness, right so the dyamand be vertu of God taketh squareness. A man sall bere the dyamaund at his left syde ; and than es it of mare vertu than on the riyt syde, for the strenth of his growyng es toward the north, whilk es the left syde of the werld and the left syde of a man, when he turnez his visage toward the este.

The dyamaund giffez to him that berez it on him hardyness, if it be freely giffen him, and it kepez the lymmes of a man hale. It giffez him

¹ Borders.

² Rock.

³ Since.

grace to ouercomme his enmys, if his cause be riytwys, bathe in were and in motyng.¹ It kepez him in his riyt witte. It kepez him fra stryfez, debates, ryotes, and fra ill dremes and fantasies, and fra wikked spirits. And if any man that deles with sorcery or enchaumentenz wald grefe him that beres the dyamaund, he schall not dere² him. Also ther sall na wylde beste assayle him that berez it, ne yit na venymous beste. And ye schall vnderstand that the dyamaund schuld be giffen freely, noyt couaited ne boght, and than it es of mare vertu and makes a man mare stalworth agayne his enmys. It helez him that es lunatyc; and if venym or puyson be broyt in place whare the dyamaund es, alsone it waxez moyst and begynnez to swete.

Yit will I tell you mare of this stane, and namely for thaim that berez this stane to diuerse cuntreez for to sell. He that will by this stane, it es nede-full till him that he cunn perfytely knawe that stane for the dessait of thaim that sellez thaim. For oft tymes thai sell to thaim that hase na grete knawying of stanes in steed dyamaundez cristalles pale and other maner of stanes, the whilk er noyt so hard as dyamaundes, and comounly thaire poyntes er broken off and thai will lightly be polischt. Neuertheles men may assay the dyamaund in this manere. First for to take the dyamaund and rubbe it on the safir or on cristall or sum other precious stanez or on clene burnyscht stele. And seyne take the adamand, that drawez the nedill til him, by the whilk schippe men er gouerned in the see, and lay the dyamaund apon the adamaund and lay a nedill before the adamaund. And if the dyamaund be

¹ In war and council.

² Hurt.

gude and vertuous, the adamaund drawes noyt the nedill to him, whils the dyamaund es thare. And this es the assay whilk thai make beyond the see. Bot it fallez oft tyme that the gude dyamaund losez his vertu by defaute of him that beres it. And therfore it es nedefull to make it to hafe his vertu agayne or elles it es of lytill prys.

OF PARADISE

Off Paradys can I noyt speke properly, for I hafe noyt bene thare; and that forthinkez me.¹ Bot als mykill as I hafe herd of wyse men and men of credence of thase cuntreez, I will tell yow. Paradys terrestre, as men saise, es the hiest land of the world; and it es so hye that it touchez nere to the cercle of the moone. For it es so hye that Noe flode myght noyt com therto, whilk flode couerd all the erthe bot it. Paradys es closed all aboute with a wall; bot whare off the wall es made, can na man tell. It es all mosse begrowen and couerd so with mosse and with bruschez that men may see na stane, ne noyt elles wharoff a wall schuld be made. The walle of Paradys strechez fra the south toward the north; and ther es nane entree open in to it, because of fire euermare brynnand,² the whilk es called the flawmand swerde³ that Godd ordaynd thare before the entree, for na man schuld entre.

And ye schall wele vnderstand that na man lifland may ga to Paradys. For by land may na man ga thider by cause of wilde bestez that er in the wilderness and for hillez and rochez, whilk na man may passe, and also for mirk placez of whilk

¹ I regret.

² Burning.

³ Flaming sword

ther er many thare. By water also may na man passe thider, for the water renneth so rudely and so scharpely, because that it cometh doun so outrageously from the high places abouen that it renneth in so grete wawes that no schipp may not rowe ne seyle azenes it. And the water roreth so, and maketh so huge noyse and so gret tempest, that no man may here other in the schippe, though he cryede with all the craft that he cowde in the hieste voys that he myghte. Many grete lordes has assayd diuerse tymes to passe by thase riuers to Paradys, bot thai myght noyt spede of thaire journee; for sum of tham died for weryness of rowyng and ower trauaillyng, sum wex blind and sum dceff for the noise of the waters, and sum ware drowned by violence of the wawes of the waters. And so ther may na man, as I said before, wyne thider, bot thurgh speciall grace of Godd. And therfore of that place can I tell yowe na mare.

A LORD OF GREAT RICHES

And in that ile thare es a lord amanges other that es wounder riche; and yit he es nowther prince, ne duke, ne erle. Neuertheles thare haldez many a man thaire landes of him, and he es a lorde of grete ricchess. For he has ilke a yere broght till him CCC^m hors lade of corne and als many of ryess. And this lorde ledez a meruailous lyf. For he has fyfty damyselles that seruez him ilk a day at his mete, and when he sittez at the mete, thai bring him mete and euermare fyfe meesses¹ togyder; and in the bringyng thai sing a faire sang.

¹ Dishes.

And thai schere his mete before him and puttez it in his mouth, as he ware a childe; for he scherez nane ne touchez nane with his handez, bot haldez tham before him on the table. For he has so lang nayles on his fyngers that he may hald na thing with tham. And that es a grete noblay in that cuntree and a grete wirschepe to hafe so lang nayles. And therfore thai late thaire nayles growe als lang as thai may and cuttez tham noyt. And sum latez tham growe so lang to thai growe all aboute thaire hend; and that think thaim es a grete noblay and a grete gentry. And the gentry of wymmen thare es to hafe smale fete; and therfore, alssone as thai er borne, thai bynd thaire fete so straite that thai may noyt waxe so grete as thai schuld. Thir forsaid damyselles als lang as thaire lorde es sittand at the mete, er nerehand all way singand; and, when he has eten ynogh of the first course, thai bring before him other fyfe meessez, syngand as thai didd before. And thus thai do ay till the end of the mete. And on this wise ledez this lorde his lyfe by alde custom of his auncestres, the whilk custom on the same wyse his successoures will vse. And thus thai vse na worthyness ne doghtyness, bot all anely liffez in lyking of the flesch, as a swyne fedd in styc. This riche man also has a full faire palays and riche, whare he dwellez, of whilke the walle es twa myle vmgang.¹ And therin er many faire gardynes; and all the pament of hallez and chaumbres er of gold and siluer. And in myddes of ane of the gardynez ez a lytill hill, whare apon es a lytil palace made with toures and pynnacles all of gold; and thare in will he sitt oft for to disporte him and take the aer, for it es made for noyt elles.

¹ Around.

THE VALE PERILOUS

Thare es a vale betwene twa hilles that es foure myle lang; and sum men callez it the Vale of Enchaunting, sum the Vale of Deuilles, and sum the Vale Perillous. In this vale er oft tymes herd many tempestes and voices vggly and hidous, bathe on nyghtes and on days. And sum tyme ther es herd noyse as it ware of trumppes and tawburnez and of nakers,¹ as it ware at festez of grete lordez.

My felawes and I, when we come nere that valay and herd speke theroff, sum of vs kest² in oure hertes to putte vs all halely in the mercy of Godd to passe thurgh that valay, and sum forsuke it and said thai wald noyt putte tham in that perill. And there was in oure company twa frere meneours³ of Lumbardy, that said thai wald ga thurgh that valay, if we wald go with tham; and so, thurgh comforth of thaire wordes and the excitacioun of thaim, we schrafe vs clene and herd messe and comound vs⁴ and went in to the valay, xiiii felawes sammen.⁵ Bot at the commyng oute we ware bot ix. We wist neuere what worthed⁶ of the remenaunt, whedir thai ware lost or thai turned agayne; bot we sawe tham na mare; twa of tham ware Grekez, and thre were Spanyols. Oure other felawes that wald noyt passe the Valay Perillous went aboute by another way for to mete vs. And my felawes and I went thurgh the valay, and sawe many meruailous thingez and gold and siluer and precious stanes and many other jowels on ilke a syde vs, as vs thoght;

¹ Drums.² Cast.³ Friar minors.⁴ Communicated.⁵ Altogether.⁶ Became.

bot whedir it ware as it semed, or it was bot fantasy, I wate noyt. Bot for the drede that we had, and also for it schuld not lette oure deuocioun, we wald lay hand on na thing that we sawe; for we ware mare deuote than euer we ware before or efter, for ferdeness of deuils that appered till vs in diuerse figures and for the multitude of deed men bodys that lay thare in oure way. For if twa kynges with thaire osten¹ had foghten togider and the maste parte of bathe the sydez had bene slaen, ther schuld noyt hafe bene no grete noumer of deed bodys as was thare. And many of thase bodys that I sawe thare semed in clething of Cristen men; bot I trowe full wele that thai come thider for couetise of gold and other jowels that er in that valay, or for fals hert myght noyt bere the grete drede and fere that thai had for the horrible siytes that thai sawe. And I do yow to witte that we ware oft tymes striken doune to the erthe with grete hidous blastez of wind and of thouner and other tempestez; bot thurgh the grace of Almyghty Godd we passed thurgh that valay hale and sounde.

THE AUTHOR TAKES HIS LEAVE

Thare er many other cuntreez and other meruailes whilk I hafe noyt sene, and therfore I can noyt speke properly of tham; and also in cuntreez whare I hafe bene er many meruailes of whilk I speke noyt, for it ware owere lang to tell. And also I will tell na mare of meruailes that er thare, so that other men that wendez thider may fynd many new thingez to speke off, whilk I hafe noyt spoken off.

¹ Hosts.

For many men hase grete lykyng and desyre for to here new thinges ; and therfore will I now ceece of tellyng of diuerse thingez that I sawe in thase cuntreez, so that thase that couetez to visit thase cuntrez may fynd new thinges ynewe to tell off for solace and recreacioun of thaim that lykez to here tham.

And I, John Mawndeuell, knyght, that went oute of my cuntree and passed the see the yere of oure Lord Jhesu Criste MCCCXXXII, and hase passed thurgh many landes, cuntreez and iles, and hase bene at many wirschipfull journeez and dedez of armez with worthy men, if all I be vnworthi, and now am commen to rest, as man discomfitt for age and trauaile and febilnes of body that constraynez me tharto, and for other certayne causez, I hafe compiled this buke and writen it, as it coome to my mynde, in the yere of oure Lord Jhesu Criste MCCCLXVI that es for to say in the foure and thrittyde yere efter that I departed oute of this land and tuke my way thiderward.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

(1340-1400)

OF PATIENCE

PACIENCE that is another remedie agains ire, is a vertu that suffreth swetely euery mannes goodnes, and is not wroth for noon harm that is doon to him. The philosopher saith, that pacience is thilke vertue that suffrith deboneirly alle the outrages of adversité and euery wickid word. This vertue makith a man lik to God, and makith him Goddes oughne¹ dere child, as saith Crist. This vertu destroyeth thin enemy. And therfore, saith the wise man, if thou wolt venquisch thin enemy lerne to suffre.

A philosopher upon a tyme, that wolde haue bete his disciple for his grete trespas, for which he was gretly amooved, and brought a yerde² to scourge the child, and whan the child saugh the yerde, he sayde to his maister, "what thenke ye to do?" "I wolde bete the," quod the maister, "for thi correccioun." "Forsothe," quod the child, "ye oughte first correcte youresilf, that hau lest³ al youre pacience for the gilt of a child." "Forsothe," quod the maister al wepyng, "thou saist soth; ⁴ have thou the yerde, my deere sone, and correcte me for myn impacience."

¹ Own.² Rod.³ Have lost.⁴ Truth.

WILLIAM CAXTON

(1415-1491)

OF DISCRETION

THER WAS a child of Rome that was named Papirus that on a tyme went with his fader which was a senatour into the chambre where as they helde their counceyll. And that tyme they spak of suche maters as was comanded and agreed shold be kept secrete upon payn of their heedes, and so departed. And whan he was comen home from the senatoire and fro the counceyll with his fader, his moder demanded of hym what was the counceyll, and wherof they spack and had taryed so longe there. And the childe answerd to her and sayd he durst not telle ner saye hit for so moche as hit was defended upon payn of deth. Than was the moder more desirous to knowe than she was to fore. And began to flatere hym one tyme, and afterward to menace hym that he shold saye and telle to her what hit was. And whan the childe sawe that he might haue no reste of his moder in no wise, he made her first promise that she shold kepe hit secrete, and to telle hit to none of the world. And that doon he fayned a lesing or a lye and sayd to her that the senatours had in counceyll a grete question

and difference which was this: whether hit were better and more for the comyn wele of Rome that a man shold haue two wyuys or a wyf to haue two husbondes. And whan she had understonde this, he defended her that she shold telle hit to none other body. And after this she wente to her gossyb and told to her this counceyll secretly, and she told to an other, and thus euery wyf tolde hit to other in secrete. And thus hit happened anone after that alle the wyues of Rome cam to the senatorye where the senatours were assemblid, and cryed wyth an hye voys that they had leuer, and also hit were better for the comyn wele that a wyf shold haue two husbondes than a man two wyues.

OF FRIENDSHIP

We rede that Damon and Phisias were so ryght parfyt frendes togyder, that whan Dionisius whiche was kynge of Cecylle had juged one to deth for his trespaas in the cyte of Syracusane whom he wold haue executed he desired grace and leue to goo in to hys contre for to dispose and ordonne his testament. And his felawe pleggid hym and was sewrtc for hym vpon his heed that he shold come agayn, wherof they that sawe and herd this helde hym for a fool and blamed hym. And he said all way that he repentid hym nothyng at all for he knewe well the trouth of his felawe. And whan the day cam and the oure that execusion shold be doon, his felawe cam and presented hymself to fore the iuge and dischargid his felawe that was plegge for hym, wherof the kynge was gretly abashid, and for the grete trouthe that was founden in hym,

he pardonyd hym and prayd hem bothe that they wold resseyue hym as their grete frende and felawe. Lo here the vertues of love that a man ought nought to doubte the deth for his frende, and to lede a lyf debonayr, and to be wyth out cruelte, to loue and not to hate which causeth to doo good ayenst euyll, and to torne payne into benefete and to quench cruelte.

SIR THOMAS MALLORY

Temp. Edward iv.

THE MONTH OF MAY

AND thus it past on from candylmas vntyl after ester that the moneth of may was come / whan euery lusty herte begynneth to blosomme / and to brynge forth fruyte / for lyke as herbes and trees bryngen forth fruyte and florysshin in may / in lyke wyse euery lusty herte that is in ony maner a louer spryngeth and florysseth in lusty dedes / For it gyueth vnto al louers courage that lusty moneth of may in some thyng to constrayne hym to some maner of thyng more in that moneth than in ony other moneth for dyuerse causes / For thenne all herbes and trees renewen a man and woman / and lyke wyse louers callen ageyne to their mynde old gentilnes and old seruyse¹ and many kynde dedes were forgeten by neclygence / For lyke as wynter rasure doth alway a rase and deface grene somer / soo fareth it by vnstable loue in man and woman / For in many persons there is no stabylete / For we may see al day for a lytel blast of wynters rasure anone we shalle deface and lay a parte true loue / for lytel or nought that cost moch thyng / this is no wysedome nor stabylete / but it is feblenes. of

¹ Service.

nature and grete disworshyp who someuer vused
this / Therfore lyke as may moneth floreth and
floryssheth in many gardyns / Soo in lyke wyse
lete euery man of worship florysshe his herte in this
world / fyrst unto god / and next vnto the ioye of
them that he promysed his feythe vnto / for there
was neuer worshypful man or worshipfull woman /
but they loued one better than another / and
worshyp in armes may neuer be soyled / but fyrst
reserue the honour to god / and secondly the
quarel must come of thy lady / and suche loue I
calle vertuous loue / but now adayes men can not
loue seuen nyzte but they must haue alle their
desyres that loue may not endure by reason / for
where they ben soone accorded and hasty hete /
soone it keleth / Ryghte soo fareth loue now a
dayes / sone hote soone cold / this is noo stabylete /
but the old loue was not so / men and wymmen
coude loue togyders seuen yeres / and no lycours
lustes were bitwene them / and thenne was loue
trouthe and feythfulnes / and loo in lyke wyse was
used loue in kynge Arthurs dayes /

wherfor I lyken loue now adayes vnto somer and
wynter / for lyke as the one is hote / and the other
cold / so fareth loue now a dayes / therfore alle
ye that be louers / calle vnto your remembrance the
moneth of may / lyke as dyd quene Gueneuer /
For whome I make here a lytel mencyon that
whyle she lyued she was a true louer / and therfor
she had a good ende /

LAUNCELOT DEAD

And whan syr Ector herde suche noyse and
lyghte in the quyre of Ioyous garde he alyght and

put his hors from hym and came in to the quyre
and there he sawe men synge and wepe / and al
they knewe syr Ector / but he knewe not them /
than wente syr Bors unto syr Ector and tolde hym
how there laye his brother syr Launcelot dede /
and than Syr Ector threwe hys shelde swerde and
helme from hym / and whan he behelde syr
Launcelottes vysage he fyl down in a swoun / and
whan he waked it were harde ony tonge to telle
the doleful complayntes that he made for his
brother / A Launcelot he sayd thou were hede of
all crysten knyghtes / and now I dare say sayd syr
Ector thou syr Launcelot there thou lvest that
thou were neuer matched of erthely knyghtes
hande / and thou were the curtest knyght that euer
bare shelde / and thou were the truest frende to
thy louar that euer bestrade hors / and thou were
the kyndest man that euer strake wyth swerde /
and thou were the godelyest persone that euer cam
emonge prees of knyghtes / and thou was the
mekest man and the jentyllest that euer ete in halle
emonge ladyes / and thou were the sternest knyght
to thy mortal foo that euer put spere in the
breste / than there was wepyng and dolour out of
mesure /

THE END OF THE MORTE DARTHUR

Here is the end of the booke of kyng Arthur and
of his noble knyghtes of the rounde table / that
whan they were hole togyders there was euer an
C and XL / and here is the ende of the deth of
Arthur / I praye you all Ientyl men and Ientyl

wymmen that redeth this book of Arthur and his knyghtes from the begynnyng to the endyng / praye for me whyle I am on lyue that god sende me good delyueraunce / and whan I am deed I praye you all praye for my soule / for this book was ended the ix yere of the reygne of kyng edward the fourth / by syr Thomas Maleore knyght as Ihesu helpe hym for hys grete myght / as he is the seruaunt of Ihesu bothe day and nyght /

LORD BERNERS

(1467-1532)

THE DEATH OF BRUCE

It fortunèd that kyng Robert of Scotland was right sore aged, and feble; for he was greatly charged with the great sickenes, so that ther was no way with hym but deth; and whan he felte that his ende drew nere, he sent for suche barones and lordis of his realme as he trusted best, and shewed them how there was no remedy with hym, but he must nedis leue this transetory lyfe, commandyng them on the faith and trouth that they owed hym, truly to kepe the realme and ayde the young prince Dauid his sonne, that whan he wer of age they shulde obey hym, and crown hym kyng, and to mary hym in suche a place as was conuenient for his astate. Than he called to hym the gentle knyght, Sir James Duglas, and sayde before all the lordes, Syr James, my dere frend, ye knowe well that I have had moche ado in my dayes to uphold and susteyn the ryght of this realme, and whan I had most ado, I made a solenne vow, the whiche as yet I haue nat accomplysshed, whereof I am right sorry; the whiche was, if I myght acheue and make an

ende of al my warres, so that I myght ones haue brought this realme in rest and peace, than I promysed in my mynd to haue gone and warred on Christis ennemies, aduersaries to our holy christen faith. To this purpose myn hart hath euer entended, but our Lord wolde not consent therto; for I haue had so moche ado in my dayes, and nowe in my last entreprise, I haue takyn suche a malady, that I can nat escape. And syth it is so that my body can nat go, nor acheue that my hart desireth, I wyll sende the hart in stede of the body, to accomplysshe myn avowe. And bycause I knowe nat in all my realme no knyght more valyaunt than ye be, nor of body so well furnysshed to accomplysshe myn avowe in stede of myselfe, therefore I require you, myn owne dere aspeciall frende that ye wyll take on you this voiage, for the loue of me, and to acquite my soule agaynst my Lord God; for I trust so moche in your noblenes and trouth, that an ye wyll take on you, I doubte nat but that ye shall achyue it, and than shall I dye in more ease and quiete, so that it be done in suche maner as I shall declare vnto you. I woll, that as soone as I am trepassed out of this worlde that ye take my harte owte of my body and enbawme it, and take of my treasoure, as ye shall thynke sufficient for that entreprise, both for yourselfe, and suche company as ye wyll take with you, and present my hart to the holy Sepulchre, where as our Lord lay, seying my body can nat come there; and take with you suche company and purueyaunce as shal be aparteynyng to your astate. And where-soeuer ye come let it be knowne howe ye cary with you the harte of kyng Robert of Scotland, at his

instance and desire to be presented to the holy Sepulchre. Than all the lordes that harde these wordes, wept for pitie. And whan this knyght, Sir James Douglas, myght speke for wepyng, he sayd, Ah gentle and noble kyng, a hundred tymes I thanke your grace of the great honour that ye do to me, sith of so noble and great treasure ye gyue me in charge; and syr, I shall do with a glad harte, all that ye haue commanded me, to the best of my true power; howe be it, I am nat worthy nor sufficient to achyue such a noble entrepryse. Than the kyng sayd, Ah gentle knyght, I thanke you, so that ye wyl promyse to do it. Syr, sayd the knyght, I shall do it vndoubtedly, by the faythe that I owe to God, and to the order of knyghthodde. Than I thanke you, sayd the kyng, for nowe shall I dye in more ease of my mynde sith I know that the most worthy and sufficient knyght of my realme shall achyue for me, the whiche I coulde neuer atteyne vnto. And thus, soone after thys, noble Robert de Bruce kyng of Scotland trepassed out of this vncertayne worlde, and hys hart was taken out of his body, and enbaumed, and honorably he was entred in the Abbey of Donfremlyn in the yere of our Lord God, MCCCXXVII the vii day of the moneth of Nouembre.—FROISSART'S *Chronicles*.

SIR THOMAS MORE

(1478-1535)

THE USE OF RECREATION

SOME manne if he bee sicke, can awaye with no wholesome meate, nor no medicine can goe downe with hym, but if it be tempered with some suche thyng for his fantasie as maketh the meate or the medicine lesse wholesome than it should be. And yet while it wil be no better, we must let him haue it so. Cassianus, the very vertuous manne, rehearseth in a certayne collacion of his that a certain holy father in makyng of a sermon, spake of heauen and heauenly thinges so celestially, that muche of his audyence with the swete sounde thereof beganne to forgeat all the world and fal aslepe: which when the father behelde, he dissembled their sleping and sodainly said unto them, "I shall tel you a mery tale." At whyche worde they lift up their heades and harkened unto that; and after the slepe therewith broken, heard hym tell on of Heauen agayne. In what wyse that good father rebuked then theyr untowarde mindes so dul unto the thyng that al our life we labour for, and so quicke and lustye towarde other trifles, I neither beare in minde, nor shall here neede to rehearse. But thus much of that

matter sufficeth for oure purpose, that whereas you demaunde me whyther in tribulacion men maye not sometyme refreshe themselves with worldly mirthe and recreacion, I can no more say, but he that cannot long endure to hold up his head and heare talking of Heauen, except he be nowe and then betwene (as though Heauen were heauines) refreshed with a meri folish tale, ther is none other remedi but you must let him haue it: better would I wish it, but I cannot helpe it.

SIR THOMAS ELYOT

(1490-1546)

COOKS AND SCHOOLMASTERS

A GENTLEMAN er he take a cooke into his service, will first examine him diligently howe many sortes of meates, pottages, and sauces he can perfectly make, and howe well he can seson them, that they may be both plesant and nourishinge; yea and if it bee but a fauconer, hee will scrupulously enquire what skill he hath in feeding, called diete, and keping of his hauke from al sicknes; also how he can reclaime hir and prepare hir to flighte. And to suche a cooke or faulconer, whome he fyndeth expert, he spareth not to giue muche wages with other bounteous rewards. But of a scholemaster, to whom he will commytt his childe, to be fed with learninge and instructed in vertue, whose life shal be the principal monument of his name and honour, he neuer maketh further inquirie but where he may haue a schoolemaister, and with howe lyttle charge. And if one perchance be founden, well learned, which will not take paynes to teach without great salarye, hee than speaketh nothing more, or els saith, What, shall so much wages be giuen to a

schoolemaister which would keepe me two seruantes?
To whome may be saide these wordes, that by his
sonne being well learned he shall receiue more
commoditie and also worship, then by the seruice
of an hundred cookes and fauconers.

ROGER ASCHAM

(1515-1568)

GROOMS AND SCHOOLMASTERS

A good horseman is skilfull to know, and hable to tell others, how by certein sure signes a man may choise a colte, that is like to proue, an other day, excellent for the saddle. And it is pitie, that commonlie more care is had, yea and that emonges verie wise men, to finde out rather a cunnynge man for their horse, than a cunnyng man for their children. They say nay in worde, but they do so in dede. For, to the one, they will gladly giue a stipend of 200 Crounes by the yeare, and loth to offer to the other 200 shillinges. God that sitteth in heauen laugheth them to skorne, and rewardeth their liberalitie as it should; for he suffereth them to haue tame and well-ordered horse, but wilde and unfortunate Children; and therfore in the ende they finde more pleasure in their horse than comforte in their children.

No learning ought to be learned with bondage. Fonde scholemasters neither can understand nor will follow this good counsell of Socrates, but wise ryders in their office can and will do both; which

is the onelie cause, that commonly the yong ientlemen of England go so vnwillinglie to schole and run so fast to the stable. For in verie deede fond scholemasters by feare do beat into them the hatred of learning, and wise ryders by gentle allurementes do breed vp in them the loue of riding. They finde feare and bondage in scholes, they feele libertie and freedom in stables; which causeth them vtterlie to abhore the one, and most gladlie to haunt the other. And I do not write this that in exhorting to the one I would dissuade yong ientlemen from the other; yea I am sorie, with all my harte, that they be giuen no more to riding then they be. For of all outward qualities, to ride faire is most cumelie for him selfe, most necessarie for his contrey; and the greater he is in blood, the greater is his praise, the more he doth excede all other therein. It was one of the three excellent praises amongst the noble ientlemen the old *Persians*—Alwaise to say troth, to ride faire, and shote well; and so it was engrauen upon Darius' tumb, as Strabo beareth witnesse:

Darius the king lieth buried here,
Who in riding and shoting had neuer peare.

PARENTS AND SCHOOLMASTERS

Before I went into *Germanie*, I came to Brodegate in Leicestershire, to take my leaue of that noble Ladie *Iane Grey*, to whom I was exceding moch beholdinge. Hir parentes, the Duke and Duches, with all the houshold, Gentlemen and Gentlewomen, were huntinge in the Parke. I founde her in her Chamber, readinge *Phaedon Platonis* in Greeke,

and that with as moch delite, as som ientlemen wold read a merie tale in *Bocace*. After salutation, and dewtie done, with som other taulke, I asked hir, whie she wold leese soch pastime in the Parke? Smiling she answered me: I wisse all their sporte in the Parke is but a shadoe to that pleasure that I find in *Plato*. Alas, good folke, they neuer felt what trewe pleasure ment. And howe came you, Madame, quoth I, to this deepe knowledge of pleasure, and what did chieflie allure you vnto it, seeinge not many women but verie fewe men haue attained thereunto? I will tell you, quoth she, and tell you a troth, which perchance ye will meruell at. One of the greatest benefites that euer God gaue me is, that he sent me so sharpe and seuer Parentes, and so ientle a scholemaster. For when I am in presence either of father or mother, whether I speake, kepe silence, sit, stand, or go, eate, drinke, be merie, or sad, be sowyng, plaiyng, dauncing, or doing anie thing els, I must do it, as it were, in soch weight, mesure, and number, euen so perfitlie as God made the world; or else I am so sharplie taunted, so cruellie threatened, yea presentlie some tymes, with pinches, nippes, and bobbes, and other waies, which I will not name for the honor I beare them, so without measure niisordered, that I thinke my selfe in hell, till tyme cum, that I must go to *M. Elmer*, who teacheth me so ientlie, so pleasantlie, with soch faire allurementes to learning, that I think all the tyme nothing whiles I am with him. And when I am called from him, I fall on weeping, because what soeuer I do els but learning is ful of grief, trouble, feare, and whole misliking vnto me. And thus my booke hath bene so moch my pleasure, and bringeth dayly to me more pleasure

and more, that in respect of it, all other pleasures, in very deede, be but trifles and troubles vnto me.

VOICE PRODUCTION

Truelye two degrees of men which haue the highest offices under the Kinge in all this realme shall greatly lacke the use of singinge, *Preachers* and *Lawyers*, because they shall not, without this, be able to rule their breastes for everye purpose. For where is no distinction in tellinge glade thinges and fearful thinges, gentlenes and cruelnes, softnes and vehementnes, and such like matters, there can be no great perswasion. For the hearers, as *Tullie* sayth, be much affectioned as he is that speaketh. At his words be they drawen; if he stand still in one fashion, their mindes stande still with him; if he thunder, they quake; if he chide, they fere; if he complaine, they sorye with him; and finallye where a matter is spoken with an apte voice for everye affection, the hearers, for the most part, are moved as the speaker would. But when a man is alwaye in one tune, like an humble bee, or els now in the top of the churche now downe, that no man knoweth where to haue him; or piping like a reede or roringe like a bull, as some lawyers do, which thincke they do best when they crye lowdest, these shall never greatly moue, as I have knowen manye well-learned have done, because theyr voice was not stayed afore with learninge to singe. For all voyces, great and small, base and shrill, weake or soft, may be holpen and brought to a good point by learning to singe.

RICHARD HOOKER

(1554-1600)

OF MUSIC

TOUCHING Musical Harmony, whether by Instrument or by Voice, it being but of high and low in sounds a due proportionable disposition, such notwithstanding is the force thereof, and so pleasing effects it hath in that very part of man which is most Divine, that some have been thereby induced to think that the Soul it self by Nature is, or hath in it Harmony. A thing which delighteth all Ages, and beseemeth all states; a thing as seasonable in grief as in joy; as decent being added unto actions of greatest weight and solemnity, as being used when men most sequester themselves from action. The reason hereof is an admirable facility which Musick hath to express and represent to the mind, more inwardly than any other sensible mean, the very standing, rising and falling, the very steps and inflections every way, the turns and varieties of all Passions, whereunto the mind is subject; yea, so to imitate them, that whether it resemble unto us the same state wherein our minds already are, or a clean contrary, we are not more contentedly by the one confirmed, than changed and led away by the other. In Harmony, the very Image and Cha-

racter, even, of Vertue and Vice is perceived, the mind delighted with their Resemblances, and brought, by having them often iterated, into a love of the things themselves. For which causes there is nothing more contagious and pestilent than some kinds of Harmony ; than some, nothing more strong and potent unto good. And that there is such a difference of one kind from another, we need no proof but our own experience, in as much as we are at the hearing of some more inclined unto sorrow and heaviness, of some more mollified and softned in mind ; one kind apter to stay and settle us, another to move and stir our affections : There is that draweth to a marvellous grave and sober mediocrity, there is also that carrieth as it were into ecstasies, filling the mind with anheavenly joy, and for the time, in a manner, severing it from the body.

OF ANGELS

But now that we may lift up our eyes (as it were) from the Foot-stool to the Throne of God, and leaving these Natural, consider a little the state of Heavenly and Divine Creatures : Touching Angels, which are Spirits Immaterial and Intellectual, the glorious Inhabitants of those sacred Palaces, where nothing but Light and Blessed Immortality, no shadow of matter for tears, discontentments, griefs, and uncomfortable passions to work upon ; but all joy, tranquillity, and peace, even for ever and ever doth dwell. As in number and order they are huge, mighty, and royal Armies, so likewise in perfection of obedience unto that Law, which the Highest, whom they adore, love,

and imitate, hath imposed upon them. Such observants they are thereof, that our Saviour himself being to set down the perfect *Idea* of that which we are to pray and wish for on Earth, did not teach to pray or wish for more, than only that here it might be with us, as with them it is in Heaven. God which moveth meer Natural Agents as an efficient only, doth otherwise move Intellectual Creatures, and especially his Holy Angels; For beholding the Face of God, in admiration of so great excellency, they all adore him; and being rapt with the love of his beauty, they cleave inseperably for ever unto him. Desire to resemble him in goodness, maketh them unweariable and even unsatiable in their longing to do by all means all manner of good unto all the Creatures of God, but especially unto the Children of Men. In the countenance of whose Nature looking downward, they behold themselves beneath themselves, even as upward in God, beneath whom themselves are, they see that character which is no where but in themselves and us, resembled.

OF LAW

Of Law there can be no less acknowledged, than that her Seat is the Bosom of God, her Voice the Harmony of the World: All things in Heaven and Earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her Power: Both Angels, and Men, and Creatures of what conditions soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the Mother of their Peace and Joy.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

(1554-1586)

A MORNING IN ARCADIA

THE third day after, in the time that the morning did strow roses and violets in the heavenly floore against the coming of the Sun, the nightingales (striving one with the other which coulde in most dainty variety recount their wrong-caused sorow) made them put of their sleep; and rising from under a tree (which that night had bin their pavilion) they went on their iorney, which by and by welcomed *Musidorus* eyes (wearied with the wasted soile of Laconia) with delightfull prospects. There were hilles which garnished their proud heights with stately trees; humble valleis, whose base estate semed comforted with refreshing of silver rivers; medows enameld with al sorts of ey-pleasing floures; thickets, which being lined with most pleasant shade, were witnessed so to by the chereful deposition of so many wel-tuned birds; each pasture stored with sheep feeding with sober security, while the prety lambs with bleting oratory craved the dams' comfort; here a shepheard's boy piping, as though he should never be old; there a young shepherdess knitting, and

withall singing, and it seemed that her voice comforted her hands to work, and her hands kept time to her voice's musick.

POETRY AND MORALS

Nowe therein of all Sciences (I speak still of humane, and according to the humane conceits) is our Poet the Monarch. For he dooth not only shew the way, but giveth so sweete a prospect into the way as will intice any man to enter into it. Nay, he dooth, as if your iourney should lye through a fayre Vineyard, at the first give you a cluster of Grapes; that, full of that taste, you may long to passe further. He beginneth not with obscure definitions, which must blur the margent with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulnesse; but hee commeth to you with words set in delightfull proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for the well-inchaunting skill of Musicke; and with a tale forsooth he commeth unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner; and, pretending no more, doth intende the winning of the mind from wickednesse to vertue; even as the childe is often brought to take most wholesom things, by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant tast; which, if one should beginne to tell them the nature of *Aloes* or *Rubarb* they shoulde receive, woulde sooner take their Phisicke at their eares then at their mouth. So is it in men (most of which are childish in the best things, till they bee cradled in their graves,) glad they will be to heare the tales of Hercules, Achilles, Cyrus, and

Aeneas ; and hearing them, must needs heare the right description of wisdom, valure, and iustice ; which, if they had been barely, that is to say Philosophically set out, they would sweare they bee brought to schoole againe.

POETRY AND VALOUR

Is it the lyric that most displeaseth, who with his tuned lyre, and well-accorded voice, giveth praise, the reward of virtue, to virtuous acts ? who giveth moral precepts, and natural problems ? who sometimes raiseth up his voice to the height of the heavens, in singing the lauds of the immortal God ? Certainly, I must confess my own barbarousness, I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas, that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet ; and yet is it sung but by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style ; which, being so evil-apparelled in the dust and cobwebs of that uncivil age, what would it work trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar ? In Hungary I have seen it the manner at all feasts and other such meetings, to have songs of their ancestors' valour ; which that right soldier-like nation think the chiefest kindlers of brave courage. The incomparable Lacedaemonians did not only carry that kind of music ever with them to the field ; but even at home, as such songs were made, so were they all content to be the singers of them, when the lusty men were to tell what they did, the old men what they had done, and the young men what they would do.

LAUGHTER AND DELIGHT

But our Comedians thinke there is no delight without laughter ; which is very wrong, for though laughter may come with delight, yet commeth it not of delight, as though delight should be the cause of laughter. But well may one thing breed both together. Nay, rather in themselves they have as it were a kind of contrarietie ; for delight we scarcely doe, but in things that have a conveniencie to our selves or to the generall nature ; laughter almost ever commeth of things most disproportioned to our selves and nature. Delight hath a ioy in it, either permanent or present. Laughter hath onely a scornful tickling. For example, we are ravished with delight to see a faire woman, and yet are far from being moved to laughter. We laugh at deformed creatures, wherein certainly we cannot delight. We delight in good chaunces, we laugh at mischaunces ; we delight to heare the happines of our friends or Country, at which he were worthy to be laughed at, that would laugh ; we shall contrarily laugh sometimes to finde a matter quite mistaken and goe downe the hill agaynst the byas, in the mouth of some such men, as for the respect of them, one shalbe hartely sorry, yet he cannot chuse but laugh ; and so is rather pained then delighted with laughter. Yet deny I not, but that they may goe well together ; for as in *Alexander's* picture well set out we delight without laughter, and in twenty mad Anticks we laugh without delight : so in *Hercules*, painted with his great beard and furious countenance in woman's attire,

spinning at *Omphale's* commaundement, it breedeth both delight and laughter. For the representing of so strange a power in love procureth delight ; and the scornefulnes of the action stirreth laughter.

SIR THOMAS NORTH

(Died 1603)

THE ANGER OF CORIOLANUS

It was even twy light when he entred the cittie of Antium, and many people met him in the streetes, but no man knewe him. So he went directly to Tullus Aufidius' house, and when he came thither, he got him up straight to the chimney harthe, and sat him downe, and spake not a worde to any man, his face all muffled over. They of the house spying him, wondered what he should be, and yet they durst not byd him risé. For ill-favoredly muffled and disguised as he was, yet there appeared a certaine majestie in his countenance, and in his silence; whereupon they went to Tullus, who was at supper, to tell him of the straunge disguising of this man. Tullus rose presently from the borde, and comming towards him, asked him what he was, and wherefore he came. Then Martius unmuffled him selfe, and after he had paused a while, making no aunswer, he sayed unto him: "If thou knowest me not yet, Tullus, and, seeing me, dost not perhappes beleeve me to be the man I am in dede, I must of necessitie bewraye my selfe to be that I am. I am Caius Martius, who hath done to thy self particularly,

and to all the Volsces generally, great hurte and mischief, which I cannot denie for my surname of Coriolanus that I beare. For I never had other benefit or recompence, of all the true and paynefull service I have done, and the extreme daungers I have bene in, but this only surname; a good memorie and witnes of the malice and displeasure thou shouldest beare me. In deede the name only remaineth with me; for the rest, the envie and crueltie of the people of Rome have taken from me by the sufferance of the dastardly nobilitie and magistrates who have forsaken me, and let me be banished by the people. This extremitie hath now driven me to come as a poore suter, to take thy chimney harthe, not of any hope I have to save my life thereby. For if I had feared death, I would not have come hither to have put my life in hazard; but prickt forward with spite and desire I have to be revenged of them that thus have banished me, whom now I beginne to be avenged on, putting my persone betweene thy enemies. Wherefore if thou hast any harte to be wrecked of the injuries thy enemies have done thee, spede thee now, and let my miserie serve thy turne, and so use it, as my service maye be a benefit to the Volsces; promising thee, that I will fight with better good will for all you then ever I dyd when I was against you, knowing that they fight more valliantly who knowe the force of their enemy then such as have never proved it. And if it be so that thou dare not, and that thou art wearye to prove fortune any more; then am I also weary to live any longer. And it were no wisdom in thee, to save the life of him who hath bene heretofore thy mortall enemy, and whose

service now can nothing helpe nor pleasure thee." Tullus hearing what he sayed, was a marvelous glad man, and taking him by the hande, he sayed unto him: Stande up, O Martius and bee of good chere, for in profering thy selfe unto us, thou dost us great honour; and by this meanes thou mayest hope also of greater things, at all the Volsces' handes. So he feasted him for that time, and entertained him in the honorablest manner he could, talking with him in no other matters at that present. —PLUTARCH'S *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*.

RICHARD HAKLUYT

(1553-1616)

AN EARLY IMPERIALIST

I MARUAILE not a little that since the first discoverie of America (which is nowe full fourescore and tenne yeeres), after so great conquests and plantings of the Spaniardes and Portingales there, that wee of Englande could neuer haue the grace to set fast footing in such fertil and temperate places as are left as yet vnpossessed of them. But againe, when I consider that there is a time for all men, and see the Portingales' time to be out of date, and that the nakednesse of the Spaniards and their long hidden secretes are nowe at length espied, whereby they went about to delude the worlde, I conceiue great hope that the time approacheth and nowe is, that we of England may share and part stakes (if we will ourselues) both with the Spaniard and the Portingale, in part of America and other regions, as yet vndiscovered. And surely if there were in vs that desire to aduance the honour of our Countrie which ought to bee in euery good man, wee would not all this while haue forslowne¹ the possessing of those landes whiche of equitie and right appertaine

¹ Delayed.

vnto vs, as by the discourses that followe shall appeare most plainely. Yea, if wee woulde beholde with the eye of pitie howe al our Prisons are pestered and filled with able men to serue their Countrie, which for small roberies are dayly hanged vp in great numbers, euen twentie at a clappe out of one iayle (as was seene at the last assises at Rochester), wee woulde hasten and further euery man to his power the deducting of some Colonies of our superfluous people into those temperate and fertile partes of America, which being within sixe weekes' sayling of England, are yet vnpossessed by any Christians, and seeme to offer themselues vnto vs, stretching neerer vnto her Maiestie's Dominions then to any other part of Europe.

ENGLISH AND SPANISH EXPLORERS

But besides the foresaid uncertaintie, into what dangers and difficulties they plunged themselues, I tremble to recount. For first they were to expose themselues unto the rigour of the sterne and uncouth Northern seas, and to make triall of the swelling waues and boistrous winds which there commonly do surge and blow; then were they to saile by the ragged and perilous coast of Norway, to frequent the unhaunted shoares of Finmark, to double the dreadfull and misty North Cape, to beare with Willoughbie's land, to run along within kenning of the Countreys of Lapland and Corelia, and as it were to open and unlocke the seuenfold mouth of Duina. Moreover, in their North-easterly Nauigations, unto what drifts of snow and

mountaines of yce euen in June, July, and August, unto what hideous overfals, uncertaine currents, darke mistes and fogs, and diuers other fearefull inconueniences they were subiect and in danger of. And here by the way I cannot but highly commend the great industry and magnanimity of the Hollanders, who within these few yeeres haue discovered to 78, yea (as themselues affirme) to 81 degrees of Northerly latitude; yet with this prouiso: that our English nation led them the dance, brake the yce before them, and gaue them good leaue to light their candle at our torch. But nowe it is high time for us to weigh our ancre, to hoise up our sailes, to get cleare of these boistrous, frosty, and misty seas, and with all speede to direct our course for the milde, lightsome, temperate, and warme Atlantick Ocean, over which the Spaniards and Portugales haue made so many pleasant, prosperous, and golden voyages. And albeit I cannot deny, that both of them in their East and West Indian nauigations haue indured many tempests, dangers, and shipwracks; yet this dare I boldly affirme: first that a great number of them haue satisfied their fame - thirsty and gold - thirsty mindes with that reputation and wealth, which made all perils and misaduentures seeme tolerable unto them; and, secondly, that their first attempts (which in this comparison I doe onely stand upon) were no whit more difficult and dangerous then ours to the Northeast. For admit that the way was much longer, yet was it neuer barred with yce, mist, or darkness, but was at all seasons of the yeere open and Nauigable; yea and that for the most part with fortunate and fit gales of winde. Moreouer, they had no forren prince to intercept or molest

them, but their owne Townes, Islands, and maine lands to succour them. And had they not continuall and yerely trade in some one part or other of Africa, for getting of slaues, for sugar, for Elephants' teeth, graines, siluer, gold, and other precious wares, which serued as allurements to draw them on by little and little, and as proppes to stay them from giuing over their attempts? But nowe let us leaue them and returne home unto ourselues.

SIR WALTER RALEGH

(1552-1618)

RALEGH IN DISGRACE

My heart was never broken till this day, that I hear the Queen goes away so far off, whom I have followed so many years with so great love and desire, in so many journeys, and am now left behind her in a dark prison all alone. While she was yet nigher at hand, that I might hear of her once in two or three days, my sorrows were the less ; but even now my heart is cast into the depth of all misery. I that was wont to behold her riding like Alexander, hunting like Diana, walking like Venus, the gentle wind blowing her fair hair about her pure cheeks, like a nymph, sometime sitting in the shade like a goddess, sometime singing like an angel, sometime playing like Orpheus ; behold the sorrow of this world ! once amiss hath bereaved me of all. O glory, that only shineth in misfortune, what is become of thy assurance ! all wounds have scars, but that of fantasy ; all affections their relenting, but that of womankind. Who is the judge of friendship but adversity, or when is grace witnessed but in offences ? There were no divinity but by reason of compassion ; for revenges

are brutish and mortal. All those times past, the loves, the sighs, the sorrows, the desires, can they not weigh down one frail misfortune? Cannot one drop of gall be hidden in so great heaps of sweetness? I may then conclude, *spes et fortuna, valet*. She is gone in whom I trusted, and of me hath not one thought of mercy, nor any respect of that that was. Do with me now therefore what you list. I am more weary of life than they are desirous I should perish, which if it had been for her, as it is by her, I had been too happily born.

RALEGH TO HIS WIFE

I was loath to write, because I know not how to comfort you, and God knows, I never knew what sorrow meant till now. All that I can say to you is, that you must obey the will and providence of God, and remember, that the Queen's Majesty bare the loss of Prince *Henry* with a magnanimous Heart, and the Lady *Harrington* of her only Son. Comfort your Heart (dearest Bess), I shall sorrow for us both; and I shall sorrow the less, because I have not long to sorrow because not long to live. I refer you to Mr. Secretary *Winwood's* Letter, who will give you a Copy of it, if you send for it; therein you shall know what hath passed; which I have written by that Letter, for my Brains are broken, and it is a torment to me to write, especially of Misery. I have desired Mr. Secretary to give my Lord *Carew* a Copy of his Letter. I have cleansed my Ship of sick Men, and sent them home; and hope that God will send us somewhat before we return; commend me to all at *Lothbury*. You

shall hear from me, if I live, from New-found-land, where I mean to clean my Ships and revictual; for I have Tobacco enough to pay for it. The Lord bless and comfort you, that you may bear patiently the Death of your most valiant Son.

This 22 of March, From the Isle of Christopher's,
yours, WALTER RALEGH.

DEATH THE COUNSELLOR

For the rest, if we seeke a reason of the succession and continuance of this boundlesse ambition in mortall man, we may adde to that which hath beene already said: that the Kings and Princes of the world haue alwaies laid before them the actions, but not the ends of those Great Ones which preceded them. They are alwayes transported with the glorie of the one; but they neuer minde the miserie of the other, till they finde the experience in themselues. They neglect the counsel of God while they enioy life, or hope of it; but they follow the counsell of Death vpon his first approach. It is hee that puts into man all wisdom of the world, without speaking a word; which *God* with all the words of his Law promises or threats doth infuse. *Death*, which hateth and destroyeth man, is beleueed; *God*, which made him and loves him, is alwaies deferred. "*I have considered,*" saith Salomon, "*all the workes that are under the Sunne; and behold! all is vanitie and vexation of spirit;*" but who beleeueth it, till Death tells it vs?

It was Death which, opening the conscience of *Charles the Fifth*, made him enioyne his sonne *Philip* to restore *Nauarre*; and King *Francis* the

First of France to command that iustice should be done vpon the Murderers of the Protestants in *Merindol* and *Cabrieries*, which til then he neglected.

It is therefore Death alone that can suddenly make man to know himselfe. He tells the proud and insolent that they are but Abiects, and humbles them at the instant; makes them crie, complaine, and repent; yea, euen to hate their forepassed happinesse. He takes the account of the rich, and proues him a beggar; a naked beggar, which hath interest in nothing but in the grauell that fills his mouth. He holds a glasse before the eyes of the most beautifull, and makes them see therein their deformitie and rottennesse; and they acknowledge it.

O eloquent, iust, and mighty Death! Whom none could aduise, thou hast perswaded! What none have dared, thou hast done! And whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised! Thou hast drawne together all the farre stretched greatnesse, all the pride, crueltie, and ambition of man; and couered it all ouer with these two narrow words: *Hic iacet*.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

(1564-1616)

MAN THE MEASURE OF ALL
THINGS

I HAVE of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o’erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?

HAMLET AND THE PLAYERS

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth

it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise; I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod; pray you, avoid it.

Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor; suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature; for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that neither having the accent of Christians, nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them; for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though in the mean time some necessary question of the play be then to be considered; that's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go make you ready.

SIR JOHN FALSTAFF

(Dame Quickly's Appeal)

Thou didst swear to me upon a parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin-chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, upon Wednesday in Whitsun week, when the prince broke thy head for liking his father to a singing-man of Windsor, thou didst swear to me then, as I was washing thy wound, to marry me and make me my lady thy wife. Canst thou deny it? Did not goodwife Keech, the butcher's wife, come in then and call me gossip Quickly? coming in to borrow a mess of vinegar; telling us she had a good dish of prawns; whereby thou didst desire to eat some; whereby I told thee they were ill for a green wound? And didst thou not, when she was gone down stairs, desire me to be no more so familiarity with such poor people; saying that ere long they should call me madam? And didst thou not kiss me and bid me fetch thee thirty shillings? I put thee now to thy book oath: deny it, if thou canst.

(*Bardolph's face*)

I make as good use of it as many a man doth of a Death's-head or a memento mori. I never see thy face but I think upon hell-fire and Dives that lives in purple; for there he is in his robes, burning, burning. If thou wert any way given to virtue, I would swear by thy face; my oath should be "By this fire, that's God's angel:" but thou art altogether given over; and wert indeed, but for the light in thy face, the son of utter darkness. When thou rannest up Gadshill in the night to catch my horse, if I did not think thou hadst been an *ignis fatuus* or a ball of wildfire, there's no purchase in money. Oh, thou art a perpetual triumph, an everlasting bonfire light! Thou hast saved me a thousand marks in links and torches, walking with thee in the night betwixt tavern and tavern; but the sack that thou hast drunk me would have bought me lights as good cheap at the dearest chandlers in Europe. I have maintained that Salamander of yours with fire any time this two and thirty years; God reward me for it!

(*Master Shallow*)

If I were sawed into quantities, I should make four dozen of such bearded hermits' staves as Master Shallow. It is a wonderful thing to see the semblable coherence of his men's spirits and his; they, by observing of him, do bear themselves like foolish justices; he by conversing with them, is turned into a justice-like serving man; their spirits are so married in conjunction with the participation of society, that they flock together in

consent, like so many wild-geese. If I had a suit to Master Shallow, I would humour his men with the imputation of being near their master ; if to his men, I would curry with Master Shallow that no man could better command his servants. It is certain that either wise bearing or ignorant carriage is caught, as men take diseases, one of another ; therefore let men take heed of their company. I will devise matter enough out of this Shallow to keep Prince Harry in continual laughter the wearing out of six fashions. Oh, it is much that a lie with a slight oath, and a jest with a sad brow, will do with a fellow that never had the ache in his shoulders. Oh, you shall see him laugh till his face be like a wet cloak ill laid up.

(Falstaff's end)

He's in Arthur's bosom, if ever man went to Arthur's bosom. A' made a finer end and went away an it had been any christom child ; a' parted even just between twelve and one, even at the turning o' the tide ; for after I saw him fumble with the sheets and play with flowers and smile upon his fingers' ends, I knew there was but one way ; for his nose was as sharp as a pen, and a' babbled of green fields. "How now, Sir John !" quoth I : "what, man ! be o' good cheer." So a' cried out "God, God, God !" three or four times. Now I, to comfort him, bid him a' should not think of God ; I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet. So a' bade me lay more clothes on his feet ; I put my hand into the bed and felt them, and they were as cold as any stone.

FRANCIS BACON

(1561-1626)

OF MARRIAGE AND SINGLE LIFE

H^EE that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief. Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the publick, have proceeded from the unmarried or childlesse men; which have sought eternity in memory, and not in posterity; and which both in affection and means have married and endowed the publike. Yet it were great reason that those that have children should have greatest care of future times; unto which they know they must transmit their dearest pledges. Some there are that lead a single life, whose thoughts doe ende with themselves, and doe account future times impertinences. Nay, there are some others that esteeme wife and children but as bills of charges. But the most ordinarie cause of a single life is liberty, specially in certain self-pleasing and humorous minds, which are so sensible of every restriction, as they wil goe neere to thinke their girdles and garters to be bonds and shakles. Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants; not

alwaies best subiects; for they are light to run away; and almost all fugitives are of that condition. A single life is proper for Churchmen; for charity will hardly water the ground where it must first fill a poole. It is indifferent for Iudges and Magistrates; for if they be facile and corrupt, you shall have a servant five times worse than a wife. For Souldiers, I find the Generals commonly in their hortatives put men in minde of their wives and children; and I thinke the despising of marriage amongst the Turkes maketh the vulgar Souldier more base. Certainly wife and children are a kinde of discipline of humanity; and single men, though they may be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhaust, yet on the other side, they are more cruell and hard-hearted (good to make severe inquisitors) because their tenderness is not so often called upon.

OF GARDENS

God *Almighty* first planted a *Garden*. And, indeed, it is the purest of Human pleasures. It is the greatest refreshment to the Spirits of Man, without which *Buildings* and *Palaces* are but Gross Handyworks; and a Man shall ever see that when Ages grow to Civility and Elegancy, Men come to *Build Stately* sooner than to *Garden Finely*; as if Gardening were the greater Perfection. I do hold it, in the Royal Ordering of *Gardens*, there ought to be *Gardens* for all the *Months* in the *Year*, in which severally things of Beauty may be then in season.

And because the *Breath* of Flowers is far Sweeter

in the Air (where it comes and goes, like the Warbling of Musick) than in the Hand, therefore nothing is more fit for that Delight than to know what be the *Flowers* and *Plants* that do best perfume the Air. Roses, Damask and Red, are fast Flowers of their Smells,—so that you may walk by a whole Row of them, and find nothing of their Sweetness, yea, though it be in a Morning Dew. Bays likewise yield no Smell as they grow, Rosemary little, nor Sweet Marjoram. That which above all others yields the *Sweetest Smell* in the *Air* is the Violet; specially the White double Violet, which comes twice a year, about the middle of *April* and about *Bartholomew-tide*. Next to that is the Musk Rose, then the Strawberry Leaves dying, with a most excellent Cordial Smell. Then the Flower of the Vines; it is a little Dust like the Dust of a Bent, which grows upon the Cluster in the first coming forth. Then Sweet-Briar, then Wall-Flowers, which are very delightful to be set under a Parlour or lower Chamber Window. Then Pinks and Gilly-Flowers, specially the matted Pink and Clove Gilly-Flower. Then the Flowers of the Lime-Tree. Then the Hony-Suckles, so they be somewhat afar off. Of Bean Flowers I speak not, because they are Field Flowers. But those which *perfume* the Air most delightfully, not *passed* by as the rest, but being *Trodden upon* and *Crushed*, are three, that is, Burnet, Wild Time, and Water-Mints. Therefore, you are to set whole Alleys of them, to have the Pleasure when you walk or tread.

For Gardens (speaking of those which are indeed *Prince-like*, as we have done of *Buildings*),

the Contents ought not well to be under *Thirty Acres of Ground*, and to be divided into three parts; a *Green* in the entrance, a *Heath* or *Desart* in the going forth, and the *Main Garden* in the midst, besides *Alleys* on both Sides. The *Green* hath two pleasures: the one, because nothing is more pleasant to the Eye than green Grass kept finely shorn; the other, because it will give you a fair *Alley* in the midst, by which you may go in front upon a *Stately Hedg*, which is to enclose the *Garden*.

For the ordering of the Ground within the *Great Hedg*, I leave it to Variety of Device; advising, nevertheless, that whatsoever form you cast it into, first it be not too busie or full of work, wherein I, for my part, do not like *Images cut out* in *Juniper* or other *Garden stuff*; they be for Children.

For the *Heath*, which was the third part of our Plot, I wish it to be framed, as much as may be, to a *Natural Wildness*. *Trees* I would have none in it, but some *Thickets* made only of Sweet-Briar and Hony-Suckle, and some Wild Vine amongst, and the Ground set with *Violets*, *Strawberries*, and *Primroses*; for these are Sweet and prosper in the Shade; and these are to be in the heath here and there, not in any order. I like also little *Heaps*, in the Nature of *Mole-Hills* (such as are in *Wild Heaths*), to be set, some with Wild Thyme, some with Pinks, some with Germander, that gives a good flower to the eye; some with Periwinkle, some with Violets, some with Strawberries, some with Couslips, some with Daizies, some with Red Roses, some with Liliū Convallium, some with Sweet-Williams Red, some with Bear's-Foot, and the like Low Flowers, being withal Sweet and Sightly.

For the *Main Garden*, I do not deny but there should be some fair *Alleys* ranged on both sides with *Fruit-Trees*; and some pretty Tufts of *Fruit-Trees* and *Arbors* with *Seats*, set in some decent Order; but these to be by no means set too thick, but to leave the *Main Garden* so as it be not close, but the Air open and free. For as for *Shade*, I would have you rest upon the *Alleys* of the *Side-Grounds*, there to walk, if you feel disposed, in the Heat of the Year or Day; but to make account that the *Main Garden* is for the more temperate parts of the Year, and, in the Heat of Summer, for the Morning and the Evening or Overcast Days.

OF REVENGE

Revenge is a kind of wild Justice, which the more Man's Nature runs to, the more ought Law to weed it out. For as for the first wrong, it doth but offend the Law; but the *Revenge* of that wrong putteth the Law out of Office. Certainly in taking *Revenge* a Man is but even with his Enemy; but in passing it over he is superior; for it is a Prince's part to pardon. And *Solomon*, I am sure, saith, *it is the glory of a Man to pass by an offence*. That which is past is gone and irrecoverable, and wise Men have enough to do with things present and to come; therefore they do but trifle with themselves that labour in past matters. There is no Man doth a wrong for the wrong's sake; but thereby to purchase himself profit, or pleasure, or honour, or the like. Therefore why should I be angry with a Man for loving

himself better than me? And if any man should do wrong, meerly out of ill nature, why? Yet it is but like the Thorn, or Bryar, which prick and scratch because they can do no other. The most tolerable sort of *Revenge* is for those wrongs which there is no Law to remedy; but then let a man take heed that the *Revenge* be such as there is no Law to punish; else a Man's Enemy is still beforehand, and it is two for one. Some, when they take *Revenge*, are desirous the Party should know whence it cometh; this is the more generous. For the delight seemeth to be not so much in doing the hurt as in making the Party repent; but base and crafty Cowards are like the Arrow that flieth in the dark. *Cosmus Duke of Florence* had a desperate saying against perfidious or neglecting Friends, as if those wrongs were unpardonable. *You shall read* (saith he) *that we are commanded to forgive our Enemies; but you never read that we are commanded to forgive our Friends.* But yet the Spirit of *Job* was in a better tune; *shall we* (saith he) *take good at God's hands, and not be content to take evil also?* And so of Friends in a proportion. This is certain, that a Man that studieth *Revenge*, keeps his own wounds green, which otherwise would heal and do well. *Publick Revenges* are for the most part fortunate; but in private *Revenges* it is not so; nay rather, vindicative persons live the life of Witches, who as they are mischievous, so end they unfortunate.

OF DEATH

Men feare death as Children feare to goe in the darke; and as that naturall feare in Children is

encreased with tales, so is the other. Certainly the feare of death in contemplation of the cause of it and the issue of it is religious; but the feare of it for it selfe is weake. It is worthie the observing, that there is no passion in the minde of man so weake but it masters the feare of death; and therefore death is no such enemy, when a man hath so many followers about him that can winne the combat of him. *Revenge* triumphes over death; *Love* esteemes it not; honour aspieth to it; *Griefe* flieth to it; Feare pre-occupateth it; nay, we see, after *Otho* had slain himselfe, pittie (which is the tendrest of affections) provoked many to die. Nay, *Seneca* adds, niceness and satiety; a man would die though he were neither valiant nor miserable, only upon a weariness to do the same thing so oft over and over. It is as naturall to die as to bee borne, and to a little Infant, perhaps, the one is as painefull as the other. He that dies in an earnest pursuit is like one that is wounded in hot blood, who for the time scarce feels the hurt; and therefore a mind fixt and bent upon somewhat that is good doth avert the dolours of death; but above all, believe it, the sweetest canticle is *nunc dimittis*; when a man hath obtained worthy ends and expectations. Death hath this also: that it openeth the gate to good fame and extinguisheth envy.

JOHN DONNE

(1573-1631)

DISTRACTION IN DEVOTION

BUT when we consider with a religious seriousnesse the manifold weaknesses of the strongest devotions in time of Prayer, it is a sad consideration ; I throw my selfe downe in my Chamber, and I call in and invite God and his Angels thither, and when they are there, I neglect God and his Angels, for the noise of a Flie, for the ratling of a Coach, for the whining of a doore ; I talke on, in the same posture of praying ; Eyes lifted up ; knees bowed downe ; as though I prayed to God ; and if God or his Angels should aske me, when I thought last of God in that prayer, I cannot tell. Sometimes I finde that I had forgot what I was about, but when I began to forget it, I cannot tell. A memory of yesterday's pleasures, a feare of tomorrow's dangers, a straw under my knee, a noise in mine eare, a light in mine eye, an any thing, a nothing, a fancy, a Chimera in my braine, troubles me in my prayer.

THE BODY OF MAN

The world is a great Volume, and man the Index of that Booke ; Even in the body of man, you may

turne to the whole world ; This body is an Illustration of all Nature ; God's recapitulation of all that he had said before, in his *Fiat lux* and *Fiat firmamentum*, and in all the rest, said or done, in all the six dayes. Propose this body to thy consideration in the highest exaltation thereof ; as it is the *Temple of the Holy Ghost* : and yet this body must wither, must decay, must languish, must perish. When *Goliath* had armed and fortified this body, And *Iezabel* had painted and perfumed this body, And *Dives* had pampered and larded this body, As God said to *Ezekiel* when he brought him to the *dry bones*, *Fili hominis, Soune of Man, doest thou thinke these bones can live ?* They said in their hearts to all the world, Can these bodies die ? And they are dead. *Iezabel's* dust is not *Ambar*, nor *Goliath's* dust *Terra Sigillata*, Medicinall ; nor does the Serpent, whose meat they are both, finde any better rellish in *Dives' dust*, then in *Lazarus'.*

DEATH THE LEVELLER

Death comes equally to us all, and makes us all equall when it comes. The ashes of an Oak in the Chimney, are no Epitaph of that Oak, to tell me how high or how large that was ; It tels me not what flocks it sheltered while it stood, nor what men it hurt when it fell. The dust of great persons' graves is speechlesse too, it sayes nothing, it distinguishes nothing : As soon the dust of a wretch whom thou wouldest not, as of a Prince whom thou couldest not look upon, will trouble thine eyes, if the winde blow it thither ; and when a whirle-winde hath blown the dust of the Church-

yard into the Church, and the man sweeps out the dust of the Church into the Church-yard, who will undertake to sift those dusts again, and to pronounce, This is the Patrician, this is the noble flowre, and this the yeomanly, this the Plebeian bran. So is the death of *Iesabel* (*Iesabel* was a Queen) expressed; *They shall not say, This is Iesabel*; not only not wonder that it is, nor pity that it should be, but they shall not say, they shall not know, *This is Iesabel*.

DE PROFUNDIS

It is a fearefull thing, to fall into the hands of the living God; but to fall out of the hands of the living God, is a horror beyond our expression, beyond our imagination.

That God should let my soule fall out of his hand, into a bottomlesse pit, and roll an unremovable stone upon it, and leave it to that which it finds there (and it shall finde that there, which it never imagined, till it came thither), and never thinke more of that soule, never have more to doe with it. That of that providence of God, that studies the life of every weed, and worme, and ant, and spider, and toad, and viper, there should never, never any beame flowe out upon me; that that God, who looked upon me, when I was nothing, and called me when I was not, as though I had been, out of the depths of darknesse, will not looke upon me now, when though a miserable and a banished and a damned creature, yet I am his creature still, and contribute something to his glory, even in my damnation. That that God, who hath

so often said to my soule, *Quare morieris ?* Why wilt thou die? and so often sworne to my soule, *Vivit Dominus*, As the Lord liveth I would not have thee dye but live, will nether let me dye, nor let me live but dye an everlasting life and live an everlasting death. That that God should frustrate all his owne purposes and practises upon me, and leave me, and cast me away, as though I had cost him nothing, that this God at last, should let this soule go away, as a smoake, as a vapour, as a bubble, and that then this soule cannot be a smoake, a vapour, nor a bubble, but must lie in darknesse, as long as the Lord of light is light it selfe and never sparke of that light reach to my soule.

ROBERT BURTON

(1576-1640)

THE DELIGHT OF THE EYES

HE that should be admitted on a sudden to the sight of such a palace as that of Escuriall in Spain, or to that which the Moores built at Granado, Fountenblewe in France, the Turke's gardens in his seraglio, wherein all manner of birds and beasts are kept for pleasure, wolves, bears, lynces, tygers, lyons, elephants, etc., or upon the banks of that Thracian Bosphorus; the pope's Belvedere in Rome as pleasing as those *horti pensiles* in Babylon, or that Indian King's delightsome garden in Ælian; or those famous gardens of the Lord Cantelow in France, could not choose, though he were never so ill apaid,¹ but be much recreated for the time; or many of our nobleman's gardens at home. To take a boat in a pleasant evening, and with musick to row upon the waters, which Plutarch so much applauds, Ælian admires, upon the river Peneus, in those Thessalian fields beset with green bayes, where birds so sweetly sing, that passengers, enchanted as it were with their heavenly musick, *omnium laborum et curarum obliviscantur*, forget forthwith all labours, care and grief; or in a gundilo through the grand canale in Venice, to see those goodly palaces, must needs refresh and give content to a melancholy dull spirit.

¹ At ease.

SOLITUDE AND MELANCHOLY

Voluntary solitarinesse is that which is familiar with Melancholy, and gently brings on as a Siren, a shooing horne, or some Sphinx, to this irrevocable gulfe; most pleasant it is at first to such as are Melancholy giuen, to walke alone in some solitary groue, betwixt wood and water, by some brooke side, to meditate vpon some delightsome and pleasant subiect, which shall affect him most. A most incomparable delight to build castels in the aire, to goe smiling to themselues, acting an infinite variety of parts, which they suppose and strongly imagine they act, or that they see done. So delightsome these toyes are at first, they could spend whole dayes and nights without sleep, euen whole yeares in such contemplations, and phantasticall meditations, which are like so many dreames and will hardly be drawne from them, winding and vnwinding themselves, as so many clocks, and still pleasing their humors, vntill at the last the Sceane turnes vpon a sudden, and they being now habitated to such meditations and solitary places can indure no company, can thinke of nothing but harsh and distastefull subiects. Feare, sorow, suspition, discontent, cares, and wearinesse of life, surprise them on a sudden, and they can thinke of nothing els, continually suspecting; no sooner are their eyes open, but this infernall plague of melancholy seaseth on them, and terrifies their soules, representing some dismall obiect to their mindes which now, by no meanes, no labour, no perswasions, they can auoide; they may not be rid of it; they cannot resist.

JOHN SELDEN

(1584-1654)

OPINION

OPINION and Affection extremely differ: I may affect a Woman best, but it does not follow I must think her the handsomest Woman in the World. I love Apples best of any Fruit, but it does not follow, I must think Apples to be the best Fruit. Opinion is something wherein I go about to give reason why all the World should think as I think. Affection is a thing wherein I look after the pleasing of myself.

'Twas a good Fancy of an old Platonick: The Gods which are above Men, had something whereof Man did partake, [an Intellect Knowledge] and the Gods kept on their course quietly. The Beasts, which are below Man, had something whereof Man did partake, [Sense and growth] and the Beasts lived quietly in their way. But Man had something in him, whereof neither Gods nor Beasts did partake, which gave him all the Trouble, and made all the Confusion in the World; and that is Opinion.

PLEASURE

Pleasure is nothing else but the intermission of Pain, the enjoying of something I am in great trouble for till I have it.

'Tis a wrong way to proportion other Men's Pleasures to ourselves; 'tis like a Child's using a little Bird [O poor Bird, thou shalt sleep with me] so lays it in his Bosom, and stifles it with his hot Breath; the Bird had rather be in the cold Air: And yet too, 'tis the most pleasing Flattery, to like what other men like.

'Tis most undoubtedly true, that all Men are equally given to their pleasure, only thus, one man's pleasure lies one way, and another's another: Pleasures are all alike simply considered in themselves; he that hunts, or he that governs the Commonwealth, they both please themselves alike, only we commend that whereby we ourselves receive some benefit, as if a man place his delight in things that tend to the common good. He that takes pleasure to hear Sermons, enjoys himself as much as he that hears Plays; and could he that loves Plays endeavour to love Sermons, possibly he might bring himself to it as well as to any other Pleasure. At first it may seem harsh and tedious, but afterwards 'twould be pleasing and delightful. So it falls out in that which is the great Pleasure of some Men, Tobacco, at first they could not abide it, and now they cannot be without it.

Whilst you are upon Earth, enjoy the good Things that are here (to that end were they given) and be not melancholy, and wish yourself in Heaven. If a King should give you the Keeping of a Castle, with all things belonging to it, Orchards, Gardens, etc., and bid you use them; withal promise you after twenty years to remove you to the Court, and to make you a Privy Councillor. If you should neglect your Castle, and refuse to eat of those fruits, and sit down, and whine, and wish

you were a Privy Councillor, do you think the King would be pleased with you?

Pleasures of Meat, Drink, Clothes, etc., are forbidden those that know not how to use them; just as Nurses cry "pah," when they see a Knife in a Child's Hand, they will never say any thing to a Man.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND
OF HAWTHORNDEN
(1585-1649)

DEATH A PROPERTY OF LIFE

IN so universal a Calamity (if Death be one) private Complaints cannot be heard: With so many Royal Palaces, it is no loss to see thy poor Cabin burn. Shall the heavens stay their ever-rolling Wheels (for what is the Motion of them but the Motion of a swift and ever-whirling Wheel, which twineth forth, and again uprolleth our Life), and hold still Time to prolong thy miserable Days, as if the highest of their Working were to do Homage unto thee? Thy Death is a Pace of the Order of this All, a Part of the Life of this World; for while the World is the World, some Creatures must dy, and others take Life. Eternal Things are raised far above this Sphere of Generation and Corruption, where the first Matter, like an ever flowing and ebbing Sea, with divers Waves, but the same Water, keepeth a restless and never tiring Current; what is below in the Universality of the Kind, not in itself doth abide: *Man* a long Line of Years hath continued, *This man* every Hundred

is swept away. This Globe environed with Air is the sole Region of Death, the Grave where everything that taketh Life must rot, the Stage of Fortune and Change, only Glorious in the Inconstancy and varying Alterations of it, which though many, seem yet to abide one, and being a certain entire one are ever many. The never agreeing Bodies of the Elemental Brethren turn one into another ; the Earth changeth her Countenance with the Seasons, sometimes looking cold and naked, other times hot and flowry : Nay, I cannot tell how, but even the lowest of those Celestial Bodies, that Mother of Months, and Empress of Seas and Moisture, as if she were a Mirrour of our constant Mutability, appeareth (by her too great Nearness unto us) to participate of our Changes, never seeing us twice with that same Face ; now looking black, then pale and wan, sometimes again in the Perfection and Fulness of her Beauty shining over us. Death no less than Life doth here act a Part, the taking away of what is old being the making Way for what is young. This earth is as a Table-book, and Men are the Notes ; the first are washen out, that New may be written in. They who forewent us did leave a Room for us, and should we grieve to do the same to those which should come after us ? Who, being suffered to see the exquisite Rarities of an antiquarys Cabinet, is grieved that the Curtain be drawn, and to give Place to new Pilgrims ?

If thou dost complain that there shall be a Time in which thou shalt not be, why dost thou not also grieve that there was a Time in which thou was not ; and so that thou art not as old as that enlivening Planet of Time ? For not to have been

a Thousand Years before this Moment, is as much to be deplored as not to live a Thousand after it, the Effect of them both being one : That will be after us, which, long long before we were, was. Our Children's Children have that same Reason to murmur, that they were not young Men in our Days, which we have to complain that we shall not be old in theirs. The Violets have their Time, though they impurple not the Winter, and the Roses keep their Season, though they disclose not their Beauty in the Spring.

DEATH IN YOUTH

But that, perhaps, which anguisheth thee most, is to have this glorious Pageant of the World removed from thee in the Spring and most delicious Season of thy Life; for though to die be usual, to die young may appear extraordinary. If God had made Life happier, he had also made it longer. Stranger and new Halcyon, why would thou longer nestle amidst these unconstant and stormy Waves? Hast thou not already suffered enough of this World, but thou must yet endure more? To live long, is it not to be long troubled? But number thy Years, and thou shalt find that whereas Ten have outlived thee, Thousands have not attained this Age. One Year is sufficient to behold all the Magnificence of Nature, nay, even One Day and Night; for more is but the same brought again. This Sun, that Moon, these Stars, the varying Dance of the Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, is that very same which the Golden Age did see. To die young is to do that soon, and in

some fewer Days, which once thou must do ; it is but the giving over of a Game, that after never so many Hazards must be lost. When thou hast lived to that Age thou desirest, or one of *Plato's* Years, so soon as the last of thy Days riseth above thy Horizon, thou wilt then, as now, demand longer Respite, and expect more to come. The oldest are most unwilling to die. It is Hope of long Life that maketh Life seem short. Heaven foreknowing imminent Harms, taketh those which it loves to itself before they fall forth. Death in Youth is like the leaving a superfluous Feast before the drunken Cups be presented. Life is a Journey in a dusty Way, the furthest Rest is Death, in this some go more heavily burdened than others : Swift and active Pilgrims come to the End of it in the Morning or at Noon, which Tortoise - paced Wretches, clogged with the fragmentary Rubbish of this World, scarce with great Travel crawl unto at Midnight. Days are not to be esteemed after the Number of them, but after the Goodness. More Compass maketh not a Sphere more compleat, but as round is a little as a large Ring ; nor is that Musician most praiseworthy who hath longest played, but he in measured Accents who hath made sweetest Melody.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE

(1605-1682)

DEATH THE LIBERATOR

IT is a brave act of valour to contemne death ; but where life is more terrible than death, it is then the truest valour to dare to live ; and herein Religion hath taught us a noble example ; for all the valiant acts of *Curtius*, *Scaevola*, or *Codrús*, doe not parallel or match that one of *Job* ; and sure there is no torture to the racke of a disease, nor any Poynyards in death itselſe, like thoſe in the way or prologue to it. *Emori nolo, ſed me eſſe mortuum nihil curo* ; I would not dye, but care not to be dead. Were I of *Ceſar's* Religion, I ſhould be of his deſires, and wiſh rather to goe off at one blow, then to be ſawed in pieces by the grating torture of a diſeaſe. Men that looke no further than their outſides, thinke health an appertinance unto life, and quarrell with their conſtitutions for being ſick ; but I, that have examined the parts of man, and know upon what tender filaments that Fabrick hangs, doe wonder that we are not alwaies ſo ; and, conſidering the thouſand doores that lead to death, doe thank my God that wee can die but once. 'Tis not onely the miſchief of diſeaſes and the villany of poyſons

that make an end of us ; we vainly accuse the fury of Gunnes, and the new inventions of death :—it is in the power of every hand to destroy us, and we are beholding unto every one wee meet, hee doth not kill us. There is therefore but one comfort left, that though it be in the power of the weakest arme to take away life, it is not in the strongest to deprive us of death. God would not exempt himselfe from that ; the misery of immortality in the flesh he undertook not, that was in it, immortall. Certainly there is no happinesse within this circle of flesh ; nor is it in the opticks of these eyes to behold felicity. The first day of our Jubilee is death ; the Devill hath therefore failed of his desires ; wee are happier with death than we should have been without it : there is no misery but in himselfe where there is no end of misery ; and so indeed, in his own sense the Stoick is in the right. He forgets that he can die, who complains of misery : we are in the power of no calamity while death is in our owne.

THE NOBLE ARMY OF MARTYRS

Were the happinesse of the next world as closely apprehended as the felicities of this, it were a martyrdom to live ; and unto such as consider none hereafter, it must be more that death to dye, which makes us amazed at those audacities that durst be nothing and return into their *Chaos* again. Certainly such spirits as could contemn death, when they expected no better being after, would have scorned to live, had they known any. And therefore we applaud not the judgment of *Machiavel*,

that Christianity makes men cowards, or that with the confidence of but half-dying, the despised virtues of patience and humility have abased the spirits of men, which Pagan principles exalted; but rather regulated the wildenesse of audacities, in the attempts, grounds, and eternall sequels of death; wherein men of the boldest spirits are often prodigiously temerarious. Nor can we extenuate¹ the valour of ancient Martyrs, who contemned death in the uncomfortable scene of their lives, and in their decrepit Martyrdomes did probably lose not many moneths of their dayes, or parted with life when it was scarce worth the living. For (beside that long time past holds no consideration unto a slender time to come) they had no small disadvantage from the constitution of old age, which naturally makes men fearfull, and complexionally superannuated from the bold and couragious thoughts of youth and fervent years. But the contempt of death from corporall animosity² promoteth not our felicity. They may sit in the *Orchestra* and noblest Seats of Heaven, who have held up shaking hands in the fire, and humanely contended for glory.

THE POPPY OF OBLIVION

But the iniquity³ of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity. Who can but pity the founder of the Pyramids? *Herostratus* lives that burnt the temple of *Diana*; he is almost lost that built it. Time hath spared the Epitaph of *Adrian's* horse, confounded that of

¹ Depreciate.

² Vigour.

³ Unfairness.

himself. In vain we compute our felicities by the advantage of our good names, since bad have equall durations, and *Thersites* is like to live as long as *Agamemnon*. Who knows whether the best of men be known, or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot, then any that stand remembered in the known account of time? Without the favour of the everlasting Register, the first man had been as unknown as the last, and *Methusalah's* long life had been his only Chronicle.

Oblivion is not to be hired.¹ The greater part must be content to be as though they had not been, to be found in the Register of God, not in the record of man.

WHAT DREAMS MAY COME

But the Quincunx² of Heaven runs low, and 'tis time to close the five ports of knowledge.

We are unwilling to spin out our awaking thoughts into the phantasmes of sleep, which often continueth precognitions, making Cables of Cobwebs, and Wildernesses of handsome groves. Beside, *Hippocrates*³ hath spoke so little, and the oneirocritical⁴ Masters have left such frigid Interpretations from plants, that there is little encouragement to dream of Paradise itself. Nor will the sweetest delight of Gardens afford much comfort in sleep; wherein the dulnesse of that sense shakes hands with delectable odours; and though in the

¹ Bribed.

² The Hyades.

³ De Insomniis.

⁴ Dream-interpreting.

Bed of Cleopatra can hardly with any delight raise up the ghost of a Rose.

Night, which Pagan theology could make the daughter of *Chaos*, affords no advantage to the description of Order; although no lower than that mass can we derive its Genealogy. All things began in order; so shall they end, and so shall they begin again; according to the ordainer of order and mystical Mathematicks of the City of Heaven.

Though *Somnus* in *Homer* be sent to rouse up *Agamemnon*, I find no such effects in these drowsy approaches of sleep. To keep our eyes open longer, were but to act our *Antipodes*. The Huntsmen are up in *America*, and they are already past their first sleep in *Persia*. But who can be drowsie at that howr which freed us from everlasting sleep? or have slumbring thoughts at that time, when sleep itself must end, and as some conjecture, all shall awake again?

SELF-CONVERSATION

Looke not for roses in Attalus his garden, or wholesom flowers in a venomous plantation. And since there is scarce any one bad but some others are the worse for him, tempt not contagion by proximity, and hazard not thyselfe in the shadow of corruption. He who hath not early suffered this shipwrack and in his younger dayes escaped this Charybdis, may make a happy voyage, and not come in with black sails into the port. Self-conversation, or to be alone, is better than such consortion. Some schoolmen tell us that he is

properly alone with whom in the same place there is no other of the same species. Nabuchodonozor was alone though among the beasts of the field, and a wise man may be tolerably said to be alone though with a rabble of people little better than beasts about him. Unthinking heads who have not learned to be alone, are in a prison to themselves if they be not also with others ; whereas, on the contrary, they whose thoughts are in a fair and hurry within are sometimes fain to retire into company to be out of the crowd of themselves. He who must needs have company, must needs have sometimes bad company. Be able to be alone.

IZAAK WALTON

(1593-1683)

THE MILKMAID'S SONG

BUT turn out of the way a little, good Scholer, towards yonder high honeysuckle hedg. We'l sit whilst this showr falls so gently upon the teeming earth, and gives a sweeter smel to the lovely flowers that adorn the verdant meadows.

Look, under that broad *Beech-tree* I sate down when I was last this way a-fishing, and the birds in the adjoining Grove seemed to have a friendly contention with an Echo, whose dead voice seemed to live in a hollow cave, near to the brow of that Primrose hil; there I sate viewing the Silver streams glide silently towards their center, the tempestuous Sea; yet sometimes opposed by rugged roots and pibble-stones, which broke their waves, and turned them into fome: and sometimes viewing the harmless Lambs, some leaping securely in the cool shade, whilst others sported themselvs in the cheerful sun. As I thus sate, these and other sights had so fully possest my soul that I thought, as the Poet has happily exprest it,

“ I was for that time lifted above earth,
And possest joyes not promis'd in my birth.”

As I left this place, and entered into the next field,

a second pleasure entertained me ; 'twas a handsome Milkmaid that had cast away all care and sung like a Nightingale. Her voice was good, and the Ditty fitted for it, 'twas that smooth Song, which was made by *Kit Marlowe*, now at least fifty years ago ; and the Milkmaid's mother sung an answer to it, which was made by Sir *Walter Raleigh* in his yonger dayes.

SWEET CONTENT

First let me tell you that, that very hour which you were absent from me, I sate down under a Willow-tree by the water-side, and considered what you had told me of the owner of that pleasant Meadow in which you then left me ; that he had a plentiful estate, and not a heart to think so ; that he had at this time many Law-Suites depending, and that they both damp'd his mirth, and took up so much of his time and thoughts, that he himselfe had not leisure to take the sweet content that I, who pretended no title to them, took in his fields ; for I could there sit quietly, and, looking on the water, see fishes leaping at Flies of several shapes and colours ; looking on the Hills I could behold them spotted with Woods and Groves ; looking down the Meadows, could see here a Boy gathering *Lillies* and *Lady-smocks* and there a Girle cropping *Culverkeyes*¹ and *Cowslips*, all to make Garlands sutable to this present Month of *May*. These and many other Field-flowers, so perfum'd the air, that I thought this Meadow like the field in *Sicily*, of which *Diodorus* speaks, where the perfumes

¹ Columbines.

arising from the place make all dogs that hunt in it to fall off, and to lose their hottest scent. I say, as I thus sate, joying in mine own happy condition, and pittying that rich man that owned this and many other pleasant Groves and Meadows about me, I did thankfully remember what my Saviour said, that *the meek possess the earth*—or rather they enjoy what the others possess and enjoy not; for anglers, and meek quiet-spirited men, are free from those high, those restless thoughts and contentions which corrode the sweets of life.

THOMAS FULLER

(1608-1661)

THE SPANISH ARMADA

Now began that *fatall year* generally foretold that it would be *wonderfull*, as it proved no less. Whence the *Astrologers* fetcht their *intelligence* hereof,—whether from *Heaven* or *Hell*, from other *Stars* or from *Lucifer* alone,—is uncertain. This is most sure that this *prediction*, though hitting the *mark*, yet missed their *meaning* who first reported and most believed it. Out comes their invincible *Navie* and *Army*, perfectly appointed for both *Elements*, *Water* and *Land*, to *Sail* and *March* compleat in all *warlike Equipage*: so that formerly, with far less *provision*, they had conquered another *new world*. Mighty was the bulk of their *ships*, the sea seeming to *groan* under them (being a burden to it as they went, and to themselves before they returned,) with all manner of artillery, prodigious in number and greatness; so that the report of their guns do stil and ought ever to sound in the ears of the English, not to fright them with any terrour, but to fill them with deserved thankfulness.

It is said of Senacherib, coming against *Hierusalem* with his numerous army, "*By the way*

that he came shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord." As the later part of this threatening was verified here, no *Spaniard* setting foot on *English* ground under other notion than a prisoner; so God did not them the honour to return the same way, who coming by South-East, a way they knew, went back by South-West, a way they sought, chased by our ships past the fifty-seventh Degree of Northen Latitude, then and there left to be pursued after by hunger and cold. Thus having tasted the *English* valour in conquering them, the *Scotch* constancy in not relieving them, the *Irish* cruelty in barbarously butchering them, the small reversion of this great navie which came home might be looked upon by religious eyes, as *reliques* not for the adoration but instruction of their nation hereafter, not to account any thing *invincible* which is less than *infinite*.

AN ESCAPE FROM SHIPWRECK

On the 9th of January following, Drake's ship having a large wind and a smooth sea, ran aground on a dangerous shoale, and struck twice on it, knocking *twice* at the door of death, which no doubt had opened the *third* time. Here they stuck from eight o'clock at night till four the next afternoon, having Ground too much, and yet too little to land on, and Water too much, and yet too little to sail in. Had God, who, as the wise man saith, *boldeth the winds in his fist*, but opened his little finger, and let out the smallest blast, they had undoubtedly been cast away, but there blew not any wind all the while. Then they conceiving aright that the best way to

lighten the ship was first to ease it of the burthen of their *sins* by true Repentance, humbled themselves by fasting under the hand of God. Then they cast out of their ship six great pieces of ordnance, threw overboard as much wealth as would break the heart of a miser to think on it, with much sugar, and packs of spices, making a caudle of the sea round about. Then they betook themselves to their prayers, the best lever at such a dead lift indeed, and it pleased God that the wind, formerly their mortall *enemy*, became their *friend*, which, changing from the starboard to the larboard of the ship, and rising by degrees, cleared them off to the sea again, for which they returned unfeigned thanks to Almighty God.

OF FANCY

Phancie is free from all engagements. It digs without spade, sails without ship, flies without wings, builds without charges, fights without bloudshed, in a moment striding from the centre to the circumference of the world, by a kind of omnipotencie creating and annihilating things in an instant ; and things divorced in Nature are married in Phancie, as in a lawlesse place. It is also most restlesse, whilst the Senses are bound, and Reason in a manner asleep, Phancie, like a sentinell, walks the round, ever working never wearied.

If thy Phancie be but a little too rank, age itself will correct it. To lift too high is no fault in a young horse, because with travelling he will mend it for his own ease. Thus lofty Phancies in young men will come down of themselves, and in

processe of time the overplus will shrink to be but even measure.

If thy fancy be too low and humble, *Let thy judgement be king but not tyrant, over it, to condemne harmlesse, yea commendable conceits.* Some, for fear their orations should giggle, will not let them smile. Give it also liberty to rove, for it will not be extravagant. There is no danger that weak folke if they walk abroad will straggle farre, as wanting strength.

Acquaint thyself with reading Poets, for there Phancie is on her throne.—And in time the sparks of the Authour's wit will catch hold on the Reader and inflame him with love, liking, and desire of imitation. I confesse, there is more required to teach one to write than to see a copy. However there is a secret force of fascination in reading Poems to raise and provoke phancie.

If thy phancie be over-voluble then—*whip this vagrant home to the first object whereon it should be settled.* Indeed, nimblenesse is the perfection of this faculty ; but levity the bane of it. Great is the difference betwixt a swift horse, and a skittish that will stand on no ground. Such is the ubiquitary Phancie, which will keep long residence on no one subject, but is so courteous to strangers, that it ever welcomes that conceit most which comes last ; and new species supplant the old ones, before seriously considered. If this be the fault of thy Phancie, I say, whip it home to the first object whereon it should be settled. This do as often as occasion requires, and by degrees the fugitive servant will learn to abide by his work without running away.

OF EXTREMES

It happeneth in all heights and heats of oppositions, as in Horse-Races ; wherein the rider, if he doth not go beyond the poste, cannot come to the poste so as to win the Prize : for being upon the speed, he must go *beyond* it that he come to it, though afterwards he may rein and turn his horse back again to the very place of the mark. Thus men being in the very heat of Contest, upon the very career of their souls, because of their passions, cannot stop short at the very Mark they aim at, but some extravagancies must be indulged to human infirmity, which in their reduced thoughts they will correct and amend ; as some Protestants, no doubt, now lashing out so far in their language, retrenched them afterwards to a just proportion of truth.

LORD CLARENDON

(1608-1674)

A LITTLE CLOUD

OF all the princes of Europe, the King of England alone seemed to be seated upon that pleasant promontory that might safely view the tragic sufferings of all his neighbours about him, without any other concernment than what arose from his own princely heart and Christian compassion, to see such desolation wrought by the pride, and passion, and ambition of private persons, supported by princes who knew not what themselves would have. His three Kingdoms flourishing in entire peace and universal plenty, in danger of nothing but their own surfeits, and his dominions every day enlarged, by sending out colonies upon large and fruitful plantations; his strong fleets commanding all seas; and the numerous shipping of the nation bringing the trade of the world into his ports; nor could it with unquestionable security be carried any whither else; and all these blessings enjoyed under a prince of the greatest clemency and justice, and of the greatest piety and devotion, and the most indulgent to his subjects and most solicitous for their happiness and prosperity.

O fortunati nimium, bona si sua norint.

In this blessed conjuncture, when no other prince

thought he wanted anything to compass what he most desired to be possessed of, but the affection and friendship of the King of England, a small, scarce discernible cloud arose in the north, which was shortly after attended with such a storm that never gave over raging till it had shaken, and even rooted up, the greatest and tallest cedars of the three nations ; blasted all its beauty and fruitfulness, brought its strength to decay, and its glory to reproach, and almost to desolation, by such a career and deluge of wickedness and rebellion, as by not being enough foreseen, or in truth suspected, could not be prevented.

JOHN MILTON

(1608-1674)

POETRY AND LIFE

NOR blame it, readers, in those years to propose to themselves such a reward, as the noblest dispositions above other things in this life have sometimes preferred ; whereof not to be sensible when good and fair in one person meet, argues both a gross and shallow judgment, and withal an ungentle and swainish¹ breast. For by the firm settling of these persuasions, I became, to my best memory, so much a proficient, that if I found those authors anywhere speaking unworthy things of themselves or of those names which before they had extolled, this effect it wrought with me : from that time forward their art I still applauded, but the men I deplored ; and above them all preferred the two famous renowners of Beatrice and Laura, who never write but honour of them to whom they devote their verse, displaying sublime and pure thoughts, without transgression. And long it was not after, when I was confirmed in this opinion, that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem ; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things ; not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men, or

¹ Boorish.

famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy.

MUSIC AND MORALS

If we think to regulat Printing thereby to rectifie manners, we must regulat all recreations and pastimes, all that is delightful to man. No musick must be heard, no song be set or sung, but what is grave and *Dorick*. There must be licensing dancers, that no gesture, motion, or deportment be taught our youth but what by their allowance shall be thought honest; for such *Plato* was provided of. It will ask more than the work of twenty licensers to examine all the lutes, the violins, and the ghittarrs in every house; they must not be suffered to prattle as they doe, but must be licenc'd what they may say. And who shall silence all the airs and madrigalls that whisper softnes in chambers? The Windows also, and the *balcone's* must be thought on; there are shrewd books, with dangerous Frontispices, set to sale: who shall prohibit them, shall twenty licensers? The villages also must have their visitors to enquire what lectures the bagpipe and the rebbeck reads, ev'n to the ballatry and the gammuth of every *municipal* fidler; for these are the Countryman's *Arcadias*¹ and his *Monte Mayors*.²

OCCASIONAL RELIGION

Truth is compared in Scripture to a streaming fountain; if her waters flow not in a perpetuall

¹ See page 32.

² Montemayor was the author of an "Arcadian romance called 'Diana.'"

progression, they sick'n into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition. A man may be a heretick in the truth; and if he beleieve things only because his Pastor sayes so, or the Assembly so determines, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds becomes his heresie. There is not any burden that som would gladlier post off to another, then the charge and care of their Religion. There be (who knows not that there be?) of Protestants and professors who live and dye in as arrant an implicit faith, as any lay Papist of Loretto. A wealthy man addicted to his pleasure and to his profits, finds Religion to be a traffick so entangl'd, and of so many peddling accounts, that of all mysteries he cannot skill to keep a stock going upon that trade. What shoulde he doe? fain he would have the name to be religious, fain he would bear up with his neighbours in that. What does he therefore, but resolves to give over toyling, and to find himself out som factor, to whose care and credit he may commit the whole managing of his religious affairs; som Divine of note and estimation that must be. To him he adheres, resigns the whole ware-house of his religion, with all the locks and keyes, into his custody; and indeed makes the very person of that man his religion; esteems his associating with him a sufficient evidence and commendatory of his own piety. So that a man may say his religion is now no more within himself, but is becom a dividuall movable, and goes and comes neer him, according as that good man frequents the house. He entertains him, gives him gifts, feasts him, lodges him; his religion comes home at night, praies, is liberally supt, and sumptuously laid to sleep, rises, is saluted, and after

the malmsey, or some well spic't bruage, and better breakfasted then he whose morning appetite would have gladly fed on green figs between Bethany and Ierusalem, his Religion walks abroad at eight, and leaves his kind entertainer in the shop trading all day without his religion.

CONSCIENCE AND TOLERANCE

Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.

And though all the windes of doctrin were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licencing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falshood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the wors, in a free and open encounter? Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing. For who knows not that Truth is strong next to the Almighty? She needs no policies, no stratagems, no licencings, to make her victorious; those are the shifts and the defences that error uses against her power; give her but room, and do not bind her when she sleeps, for then she speaks not true, as the old Proteus did, who spake oracles only when he was caught and bound, but then rather she turns herself into all shapes except her own, and perhaps tunes her voice according to the time, as Micaiah did before Ahab, untill she be adjured into her own likeness. Yet is it not impossible that she may have more shapes then one.

How many things might be tolerated in peace, and left to conscience, had we but charity, and

were it not the chief strong hold of our hypocrisie to be ever judging one another. I fear yet this iron yoke of outward conformity hath left a slavish print upon our necks ; the ghost of a linnen decency yet haunts us. We stumble and are impatient at the least dividing of one visible congregation from another, though it be not in fundamentalls ; and through our forwardnes to suppress, and our backwardnes to recover any enthrall'd peece of truth out of the gripe of custom, we care not to keep truth separated from truth, which is the fiercest rent and disunion of all. We doe not see that while we still affect by all means a rigid externall formality, we may as soon fall again into a grosse conforming stupidity, a stark and dead congealment of *wood and hay and stubble* forc't and frozen together, which is more to the sudden degenerating of a Church then many petty schisms. Not that I can think well of every light separation, or that all in a Church is to be expected *gold and silver and precious stones* ; it is not possible for man to sever the wheat from the tares, the good fish from the other frie ; that must be the Angels' Ministry at the end of mortall things. Yet if all cannot be of one mind, (as who looks they should be?) this doubtles is more wholesome, more prudent, and more Christian : that many be tolerated, rather then all compell'd.

CONTROVERSY AND GROWTH

For as in a body, when the blood is fresh, the spirits pure and vigorous, not only to vital but to ratioll faculties, and those in the acutest and the

pertest operations of wit and sottlety, it argues in what good plight and constitution the body is: so when the cheerfulness of the people is so sprightly up, as that it has, not only wherewith to guard well its own freedom and safety, but to spare, and to bestow upon the solidest and sublimest points of controversie, and new invention, it betok'n us not degenerated, nor drooping to a fatall decay, but casting off the old and wrincl'd skin of corruption to outlive these pangs and wax young again, entring the glorious waies of Truth and prosperous vertue destin'd to become great and honourable in these latter ages. Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant Nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: Methinks I see her as an Eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazl'd eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain it self of heav'nly radiance, while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticat a year of sects and schisms.

CLOISTERED VIRTUE

Good and evill we know in the field of this World grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of cvill, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discern'd, that those confused seeds which were impos'd on Psyche as an incessant labour to cull out and sort

asunder were not more intermixt. It was from out the rinde of one apple tasted, that the knowledge of good and evill as two twins cleaving together leapt forth into the World. And perhaps this is that doom which Adam fell into of knowing good and evill, that is to say of knowing good by evill. As therefore the state of man now is, what wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear without the knowledge of evill? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true warfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered vertue, unexercis'd and unbreath'd, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortall garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat.

JEREMY TAYLOR

(1613-1667)

SIMILITUDES

FOR so have I seen a Lark rising from his bed of grass and soaring upwards, singing as he rises and hopes to get to Heaven and climb above the clouds ; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and inconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest than it could recover by the libration and frequent weighing of its wings, till the little creature sat down to pant and stay till the storm was over ; and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing as if it had learned music from an Angel as he passed sometimes through the air about his ministering here below. So is the prayer of a good man.

But as when the Sun, approaching towards the gates of the morning, first opens a little eye of Heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to a Cock, and calls up the Lark to Mattens, and by and by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns, like those which bedecked the brows

of *Moses*, when he was forced to wear a veil because himself had seen the face of God ; and still, while a man tells the story, the Sun gets up higher, till he shews a fair face and a full light, and then he shines one whole day, under a cloud often, sometimes weeping great and little showres, and sets quickly ; so is a man's reason and his life.

For so have I known the boisterous North wind pass through the yielding air which open'd its bosom, and appeased its violence, by entertaining it with easie compliance in all the regions of its reception. But when the same breath of Heaven hath been check'd with the stiffness of a Tower or the united strength of a Wood, it grew mighty, and dwelt there, and made the highest branches stoop and make a smooth path for it on the top of all its glories : so is Sickness, and so is the Grace of God.

So we sometimes espy a bright cloud formed into an irregular figure ; when it is observed by unskilful and fantastic travellers, it looks like a centaur to some and as a castle to others ; some tell that they saw an army with banners, and it signifies war ; but another, wiser than this fellow, says it looks for all the world like a flock of sheep, and foretells plenty ; and all the while it is nothing but a shining cloud, by its own mobility and the activity of a wind cast into a contingent and artificial shape : so it is in this great mystery of our religion, in which some espy strange things which God intended not, and others see not what God hath plainly told.

So have I seen a Rose newly springing from the clefts of its hood, and at first it was fair as the morn-

ing, and full with the dew of Heaven as a Lamb's-fleece ; but when a ruder breath had forced open its virgin modesty and dismantled its too youthful and unripe retirements, it began to put on darkness, and decline to softness and the symptoms of a sickly age ; it bowed the head and broke its stalk, and at night, having lost some of its leaves and all its beauty, it fell into the portion of weeds and outworn faces.

TWO WAYS OF LOVE

But otherwise do Fathers, and otherwise do Mothers handle their Children.

These soften them with kisses and imperfect noises, with the pap and breast-milk of soft endearments ; they rescue them from Tutors, and snatch them from discipline ; they desire to keep them fat and warm and their feet dry, and their bellies full ; and then the Children govern and cry, and prove fools and troublesome, so long as the feminine Republick doth endure. But Fathers, because they design to have their Children wise and valiant, apt for Counsel or for Arms, send them to severe Governments and tie them to study, to hard labour, and afflictive contingencies. They rejoice when the bold Boy strikes a Lion with his Hunting-spear and shrinks not when the Beast comes to affright his early courage.

NATURA PARENDO VINCITUR

For as it is in plants which nature voluntarily thrusts forth, she makes regular provisions, and

dresses them with strength and ornament, with easiness and full stature; but if you thrust a jessamine there where she would have had a daisy grow; or bring the tall fir from dwelling in his own country, and transport the orange or the almond-tree near the fringes of the north star, nature is displeased, and becomes unnatural, and starves her sucklings, and renders you a return less than your charge and expectation; so it is in all our appetites; when they are natural and proper, nature feeds them and makes them healthful and lusty as the coarse issue of the Scythian clown; she feeds them and makes them easy without cares and costly passion; but if you thrust an appetite into her which she intended not, she gives you sickly and uneasy banquets; you must struggle with her for every drop of milk she gives beyond her own needs; you may get gold from her entrails, and at a great price provide ornaments for your queens and princely women; but our lives are spent in the purchase; and when you have got them, you must have more, for these cannot content you, nor nourish the spirit.

GOD'S PATIENCE

When Abraham sat at his tent door, according to his custom, waiting to entertain strangers, he espied an old man, stooping and leaning on his staff, weary with age and travail, coming towards him, who was a hundred years of age; he received him kindly, washed his feet, provided supper, caused him to sit down, but observing that the old man ate and prayed not, nor begged for a blessing on his

meat, he asked him why he did not worship the God of heaven. The old man told him that he worshipped the fire only, and acknowledged no other God. At which answer Abraham grew so zealously angry, that he threw the old man out of his tent, and exposed him to all the evils of the night and an unguarded condition. When the old man was gone, God called to Abraham, and asked him where the stranger was. He replied, "I thrust him away, because he did not worship thee." God answered him, "I have suffered him these hundred years, though he dishonoured me ; and wouldest thou not endure him one night, when he gave thee no trouble ?"

THE MIND KING OF ITSELF

Contentedness in all accidents brings great peace of spirit, and is the great and only instrument of temporal felicity. It removes the sting from the accident, and makes a man not to depend upon chance and the uncertain dispositions of men for his well-being, but only on God and his own Spirit. We our selves make our own fortunes good or bad ; and when God lets loose a Tyrant upon us, or a sickness, or scorn, or a lessened fortune ; if we fear to die, or know not to be patient, or are proud, or covetous ; then the calamity sits heavy on us. But if we know how to manage a noble principle, and fear not Death so much as a dishonest action, and think Impatience a worse evil than a Fever, and Pride to be the biggest disgrace, and Poverty to be infinitely desirable before the torments of Covetousness ; then we who now think vice to be so easie,

and make it so familiar, and think the cure so impossible, shall quickly be of another mind, and reckon these accidents amongst things eligible. But he that suffers a transporting passion concerning things within the power of others, is free from sorrow and amazement no longer than his enemy shall give him leave ; and it is ten to one but he shall be smitten then and there where it shall most trouble him ; for so the Adder teaches us where to strike, by her curious and fearful defending of her head.

We are in the world like men playing at Tables ; the chance is not in our power, but to play it is ; and when it is fallen, we must manage it as we can ; and let nothing trouble us, but when we do a base action, or speak like a fool, or think wickedly. These things God hath put in our powers ; but concerning those things which are wholly in the choice of another, they cannot fall under our deliberation, and therefore neither are they fit for our passions. My fear may make me miserable, but it cannot prevent what another hath in his power and purpose ; and prosperities can only be enjoyed by them who fear not at all to lose them ; since the amazement and passion concerning the future takes off all the pleasure of the present possession. Therefore if thou hast lost thy land, do not also lose thy constancy ; and if thou must die a little sooner, yet do not die impatiently. For no chance is evil to him that is content, and *to a man nothing miserable unless it be unreasonable*. No man can make another man to be his slave, unless he hath first enslaved himself to life and death, to pleasure or pain, to hope or fear ; command these passions, and you are freer than the Parthian Kings.

ABRAHAM COWLEY

(1618-1667)

THE POETS' POET

I WAS even then acquainted with the Poets; and perhaps it was the immature and immoderate love of them which stamp'd first, or rather engraved, these Characters in me; they were like Letters cut into the Bark of a young Tree, which with the Tree still grow proportionably. But how this love came to be produced in me so early, is a hard question; I believe, I can tell the particular little chance that fill'd my head first with such Chimes of Verse as have never since left ringing there; for I remember, when I began to read, and to take some pleasure in it, there was wont to lie in my Mother's Parlour (I know not by what accident, for she herself never in her life read any Book but of Devotion), but there was wont to lie *Spenser's* Works; this I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the Stories of the Knights, and Giants, and Monsters, and brave Houses which I found every where there (though my understanding had little to do with all this); and by degrees, with the tinckling of the Rhyme and Dance of the Numbers; so that, I think, I

had read him all over before I was twelve years old, and was thus made a Poet.

OF MODERATION

When you have pared away all the Vanity, what solid and natural contentment does there remain, which may not be had with five hundred pounds a year? Not so many servants or horses; but a few good ones, which will do all the business as well: not so many choice dishes at every Meale, but at several meals all of them, which makes them both the more healthy, and the more pleasant: not so rich garments, nor so frequent changes; but as warm and as comely, and so frequent change too, as is every jot as good for the master, though not for the Taylor or *Valet de chambre*: not such a stately Palace, nor guilt rooms, or the costliest sorts of Tapestry; but a convenient brick house, with decent Wainscot, and pretty Forest-work hangings. Lastly, (for I omit all other particulars, and will end with that which I love most in both conditions) not whole Woods cut in walks, nor vast Parks, nor Fountain or Cascade gardens; but herb, and Flower, and fruit gardens, which are more useful, and the water every whit as clear and wholesome as if it darted from the breasts of a marble Nymph, or the Urn of a River-God.

OF OBSCURITY

If we engage into a large Acquaintance and various familiarities, we set open our gates to the

Invaders of most of our time ; we expose our life to a *quotidian ague* of frigid impertinencies, which would make a wise man tremble to think of. Now, as for being known much by sight, and pointed at, I cannot comprehend the honour that lies in that ; whatsoever it be, every Mountebank has it more than the best Doctor, and the Hangman more than the Lord Chief Justice of a City. Every creature has it, both of Nature and Art, if it be any ways extraordinary.

I love and commend a true good Fame, because it is the shadow of Virtue ; not that it doth any good to the Body which it accompanies, but 'tis an efficacious shadow, and, like that of St. *Peter*, cures the Diseases of others. The best kinde of Glory, no doubt, is that which is reflected from Honesty, such as was the glory of *Cato* and *Aristides* ; but it was harmful to them both, and is seldom beneficial to any man whilst he lives ; what it is to him after his death I cannot say, because I love not *Philosophy* merely notional and conjectural, and no man who has made the Experiment has been so kind as to come back to inform us. Upon the whole matter, I account a person who has a moderate Minde and Fortune, and lives in the conversation of two or three agreeable friends, with little commerce in the world besides, who is esteemed well enough by his few neighbours that know him, and is truly irreproachable by any body ; and so, after a healthful quiet life, before the great inconveniences of old age, goes more silently out of it than he came in (for I would not have him so much as Cry in the *Exit*) ; this Innocent Deceiver of the world, as Horace calls him, this *Muta persona*, I take to have been more happy in his Part, than

the greatest Actors that fill the Stage with show and noise, nay, even than *Augustus* himself, who askt with his last breath whether he had not played his *Farce* very well.

ON SOLITUDE

The truth of the matter is, that neither he who is a Top in the world is a fit man to be alone; nor he who has set his heart much upon the world, though he have never so much understanding; so that Solitude can be well fitted and set right, but upon a very few persons. They must have enough knowledge of the World to see the vanity of it, and enough Virtue to despise all Vanity; if the Mind be possest with any Lust or Passions, a man had better be in a Fair, than in a Wood alone. They may, like petty Thieves, cheat us perhaps, and pick our pockets in the midst of company; but like Robbers, they use to strip and bind or murder us, when they catch us alone. This is but to retreat from Men, and to fall into the hands of Devils. It is like the punishment of Parricides among the *Romans*, to be sow'd into a Bag, with an Ape, a Dog, and a Serpent.

The first work, therefore, that a man must do, to make himself capable of the good of Solitude, is the very Eradication of all Lusts; for how is it possible for a Man to enjoy himself, while his Affections are tyed to things without himself? In the second place, he must learn the Art, and get the Habit of Thinking; for this too, no less than well-speaking, depends upon much practice; and Cogitation is the thing which distinguishes the

Solitude of a God from a wild Beast.¹ Now because the soul of man is not, by its own Nature or observation, furnisht with sufficient Materials to work upon, it is necessary for it to have continual recourse to Learning and Books for fresh supplies, so that the solitary Life will grow indigent, and be ready to starve, without them; but if once we be thoroughly engaged in the Love of Letters, instead of being wearied with the length of any day, we shall only complain of the shortness of our whole Life.

¹ Cf. Burke, p. 179.

JOHN BUNYAN

(1628-1688)

THE VALLEY OF HUMILIATION

BUT we will come again to this Valley of *Humiliation*. It is the best and most fruitful piece of Ground in all those parts. It is fat Ground, and as you see, consisteth much in Meddows; and if a man was to come here in the Summer time, as we do now, if he knew not anything before thereof, and if he also delighted himself in the sight of his Eyes, he might see that which would be delightful to him. Behold how green this Valley is; also how beautified *with Lillies*. I have also known many labouring Men that have got good Estates in this Valley of *Humiliation*; for indeed it is a very fruitful Soil, and doth bring forth by handfuls. Some also have wished that the next way to their Father's House were here, that they might be troubled no more with either Hills or Mountains to go over; but the way is the way, and there's an end.

Now, as they were going along and talking, they espied a Boy feeding his Father's Sheep. The Boy was in very mean Cloaths, but of a fresh and well-favoured Countenance; and as he sate by

himself, he Sung. Hark !, said Mr. *Great-heart*, to what the Shepherd's Boy saith. So they hearkened, and he said—

“ *He that is down needs fear no fall,
He that is low, no Pride;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be His Guide.
I am content with what I have,
Little be it or much;
And, Lord, contentment still I crave,
Because thou savest such.
Fulness to such a burden is
That go on Pilgrimage;
Here little, and hereafter Bliss,
Is best from Age to Age.*”

Then said their *Guide*: Do you hear him? I will dare to say, that this Boy lives a merrier Life, and wears more of that Herb called *Heart's ease* in his Bosom, then he that is clad in Silk and Velvet. But we will proceed in our discourse.

In this valley our Lord formerly had his *Countrey House*; he loved much to be here. He loved also to walk these Medows, and he found the Air was pleasant. Besides, here a man shall be free from the Noise and from the hurryings of this Life; all States are full of Noise and Confusion, only the Valley of *Humiliation* is that empty and Solitary Place. Here a man shall not be so let and hindred in his Contemplation, as in other places he is apt to be. This is a Valley that no body walks in, but those that love a Pilgrim's life. And tho' *Christian* had the hard hap to meet here with *Apollion*, and to enter with him a brisk encounter: Yet I must tell you that in former times men have met with Angels here, have found Pearls here, and have in this place found the words of Life.

CROSSING THE RIVER

After this, it was noised about that Mr. *Valiant-for-truth* was taken with a Summons by the same *Post* as the other, and had this for a Token that the Summons was true, *That his pitcher was broken at the fountain*. When he understood it, he called for his Friends, and told them of it. Then said he, I am going to my Father's; and tho' with great Difficulty I am got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the Trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. *My Sword* I give to him that shall succeed me in my Pilgrimage, and my *Courage* and *Skill* to him that can get it. My *Marks* and *Scarrs* I carry with me, to be a Witness for me that I have fought his Battels who now will be my Rewarder.

When the Day that he must go hence was come, many accompanied him to the River side, into which as he went, he said, *Death, where is thy sting?* And as he went down deeper, he said, *Grave, where is thy victory?* So he passed over, and all the Trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE

(Died 1699)

POETRY AND MUSIC

WHETHER it be that the fierceness of the *Gothick* Humors, or Noise of their perpetual Wars, frightened it away, or that the unequal mixture of the Modern Languages would not bear it; certain it is, that the great Heights and Excellency both of Poetry and Musick fell with the *Roman* Learning and Empire, and have never since recovered the Admiration and Applauses that before attended them. Yet, such as they are amongst us, they must be confest to be the Softest and Sweetest, the most General and most Innocent Amusements of common Time and Life. They still find Room in the Courts of Princes, and the Cottages of Shepherds. They serve to Revive and Animate the dead Calm of poor or idle Lives, and to Allay or Divert the violent Passions and Perturbations of the greatest and the busiest Men. And both these Effects are of equal use to Humane Life; for the Mind of Man is like the Sea, which is neither agreeable to the Beholder nor the Voyager in a Calm or in a Storm, but is so to both when a little Agitated by gentle Gales; and so the Mind, when

moved by soft and easy Passions or Affections. I know very well that many who pretend to be Wise by the Forms of being Grave, are apt to despise both Poetry and Musick as Toys and trifles too light for the Use or Entertainment of serious Men. But, whoever find themselves wholly insensible to these Charms, would, I think, do well to keep their own Counsel, for fear of Reproaching their own Temper, and bringing the Goodness of their Natures, if not of their Understandings, into Question; it may be thought at least an ill Sign, if not an ill Constitution, since some of the Fathers went so far as to esteem the Love of Musick a sign of Predestination, as a thing Divine, and Reserved for the Felicities of Heaven itself. While this World lasts, I doubt not but the Pleasure and Request of these Two Entertainments will do so too: and happy those that content themselves with these, or any other so Easy and so Innocent; and do not trouble the World, or other Men, because they cannot be quiet themselves, though no body hurts them.

When all is done, Human Life is, at the greatest and the best, but like a froward Child, that must be Play'd with and Humor'd a little to keep it quiet till it falls asleep, and then the Care is over.

JOHN DRYDEN

(1631-1700)

SHAKESPEARE AND BEN JONSON

To begin then with Shakespeare. He was the man who of all modern and perhaps ancient poets had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still ¹ present to him, and he drew them not laboriously but luckily; when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation; he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is everywhere alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clenches,² his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him; no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets

"Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi."

As for Jonson, to whose character I am now

¹ Constantly.

² Clichés.

arrived, if we look upon him while he was himself (for his last plays were but his dotages), I think him the most learned and judicious writer which any theatre ever had. He was a most severe judge of himself, as well as others. One cannot say he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. In his works you find little to retrench or alter. Wit and language, and humour also in some measure, we had before him; but something of art was wanting to the drama till he came. He managed his strength to more advantage than any who preceded him. You seldom find him making love in any of his scenes, or endeavouring to move the passions; his genius was too sullen and saturnine to do it gracefully, especially when he knew he came after those who had performed both to such a height. Humour was his proper sphere; and in that he delighted most to represent mechanic people. He was deeply conversant in the ancients, both Greek and Latin, and he borrowed boldly from them; there is scarce a poet or historian among the Roman authors of those times, whom he has not translated in *Sejanus* and *Catiline*. But he has done his robberies so openly that one may see he fears not to be taxed by any law. He invades authors like a monarch; and what would be theft in other poets is only victory in him. With the spoils of these writers he so represents old Rome to us, in its rites, ceremonies, and customs, that if one of their poets had written either of his tragedies, we had seen less of it than in him. If I compare him with Shakespeare, I must acknowledge him the most correct poet, but Shakespeare the greater wit. Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our

dramatic poets ; Jonson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing : I admire him, but I love Shakespeare.

IN PRAISE OF CHAUCER

He must have been a man of a most wonderful comprehensive nature, because, as it has been truly observed of him, he has taken into the compass of his *Canterbury Tales* the various manners and humours (as we now call them) of the whole English nation in his age. Not a single character has escaped him. All his pilgrims are severally distinguished from each other ; and not only in their inclinations, but in their very physiognomies and persons. The matter and manner of their tales and of their telling are so suited to their different education, humours, and callings, that each of them would be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and serious characters are distinguished by their several sorts of gravity ; their discourses are such as belong to their age, their calling, and their breeding ; such as are becoming of them, and of them only. Some of his persons are vicious, and some virtuous ; some are unlearned, or (as Chaucer calls them) lewd, and some are learned. But enough of this ; there is such a variety of game springing up before me, that I am distracted in my choice, and know not what to follow. It is sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that here is God's plenty.

THE TRANSLATOR IN HIS
OLD AGE

What Virgil wrote in the vigour of his age, in plenty and its ease, I have undertaken to translate in my declining years; struggling with wants, oppressed with sickness, curbed in my genius, liable to be misconstrued in all I write; and my judges, if they are not very equitable, already prejudiced against me by the lying character which has been given them of my morals. Yet steady to my principles and not dispirited with my afflictions, I have, by the blessing of God in my endeavours, overcome all difficulties, and in some measure acquitted myself of the debt which I owed the public when I undertook this work. For what I have done, imperfect as it is for want of health and leisure to correct it, will be judged in after ages, and possibly in the present, to be no dishonour to my native country, whose language and poetry would be more esteemed abroad, if they were better understood. Somewhat (give me leave to say) I have added to both of them in the choice of words and harmony of numbers, which were wanting (especially the last) in all our poets, even in those who, being endued with genius, yet have not cultivated their mother tongue with sufficient care; or relying on the beauty of their thoughts, have judged the ornament of words, and sweetness of sound, unnecessary.

ROBERT SOUTH

(1673-1701)

AGAINST SIMILITUDES¹

FOR there is a certain majesty in plainness; as the proclamation of a prince never frisks it in tropes or fine conceits, in numerous and well turned periods, but commands in sober natural expressions. A substantial beauty, as it comes out of the hands of nature, needs neither paint nor patch; things never made to adorn, but to cover something that would be hid. It is with expression and the clothing of a man's conceptions as with the clothing of a man's body. All dress and ornament supposes imperfection, as designed only to supply the body with something from without, which it wanted, but had not of its own. Gaudery is a pitiful and mean thing, not extending farther than the surface of the body; nor is the highest gallantry considerable to any but to those who would hardly be considered without it; for in that case indeed there may be great need of an outside, when there is little or nothing within.

And thus also it is with the most necessary and important truths; to adorn and clothe them is to

¹ See page 96.

cover them, and that to obscure them. The eternal salvation and damnation of souls are not things to be treated of with jests and witticisms. And he who thinks to furnish himself out of plays and romances with language for the pulpit, shews himself much fitter to act a part in the revels, than for a cure of souls.

“I speak the words of soberness,” said Saint Paul, and I preach the gospel not with the “enticing words of man’s wisdom.” This was the way of the apostles’ discoursing of things sacred. Nothing here of “the fringes of the north star”; nothing of “nature’s becoming unnatural”; nothing of the “down of angels’ wings,” or “the beautiful locks of cherubims”; no starched similitudes introduced with a “Thus have I seen a cloud rolling in its airy mansion,” and the like. No, these were sublimities above the rise of the apostolic spirit. For the apostles, poor mortals, were content to take lower steps, and to tell the world in plain terms, that “he who believed should be saved, and that he who believed not should be damned.” And this was the dialect which pierced the conscience, and made the hearers cry out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” It tickled not the ear, but sunk into the heart; and when men came from such sermons, they never commended the preacher for his taking voice or gesture; for the fineness of such a simile, or the quaintness of such a sentence; but they spoke like men conquered with the overpowering force and evidence of the most concerning truths.

DANIEL DEFOE

(1661-1731)

THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN

I HAVE often thought of it as one of the most barbarous customs in the world, considering us as a civilized and a Christian country, that we deny the advantages of learning to women. We reproach the sex every day with folly and impertinence; while I am confident, had they the advantages of education equal to us, they would be guilty of less than ourselves.

One would wonder, indeed, how it should happen that women are conversible at all; since they are beholden to natural parts for all their knowledge. Their youth is spent to teach them to stitch and sew, or make baubles. They are taught to read, indeed, and perhaps to write their names or so; and that is the height of a woman's education. And I would but ask any who slight the sex for their understanding, what is a man (a gentleman, I mean) good for, that is taught no more? I need not give instances, or examine the character of a gentleman, with a good estate, of a good family, and with tolerable parts; and examine what figure he makes for want of education.

The soul is placed in the body like a rough diamond ; and must be polished, or the lustre of it will never appear. And 'tis manifest, that as the rational soul distinguishes us from brutes, so education carries on the distinction, and makes some less brutish than others. This is too evident to need any demonstration. But why then should women be denied the benefit of instruction ? If knowledge and understanding had been useless additions to the sex, God Almighty would never have given them capacities ; for he made nothing needless. Besides, I would ask such, what they can see in ignorance, that they should think it a necessary ornament to a woman ? or how much worse is a wise woman than a fool ?¹ or what has the woman done to forfeit the privilege of being taught ? Does she plague us with her pride and impertinence ? Why did we not let her learn, that she might have had more wit ? Shall we upbraid women with folly, when 'tis only the error of this inhuman custom that hindered them from being made wiser ?

The capacities of women are supposed to be greater and their senses quicker than those of the men ; and what they might be capable of being bred to, is plain from some instances of female wit, which this age is not without. Which upbraids us with Injustice, and looks as if we denied women the advantages of education, for fear they should *vie* with the men in their improvements.

The great distinguishing difference which is seen in the world between men and women, is in their education ; and this is manifested by comparing it

¹ Cf. Jane Austen, p. 224.

with the difference between one man or woman, and another.

And herein it is that I take upon me to make such a bold assertion, That all the world are mistaken in their practice about women. For I cannot think that God Almighty ever made them so delicate, so glorious creatures, and furnished them with such charms, so agreeable and so delightful to mankind, with souls capable of the same accomplishments with men, and all, to be only Stewards of our Houses, Cooks, and Slaves.

Not that I am for exalting the female government in the least ; but, in short, *I would have men take women for companions, and educate them to be fit for it.* A woman of sense and breeding will scorn as much to encroach upon the prerogative of man, as a man of sense will scorn to oppress the weakness of the woman. But if the women's souls were refined and improved by teaching, that word would be lost. To say the *weakness* of the sex, as to judgment, would be nonsense ; for ignorance and folly would be no more to be found among women than men.

I remember a passage which I heard from a very fine woman. She had wit and capacity enough, extraordinary shape and face, and a great fortune ; but had been cloistered up all her time, and for fear of being stolen, had not had the liberty of being taught the common necessary knowledge of woman's affairs. And when she came to converse in the world, her natural wit made her so sensible of the want of education, that she gave this short reflection on herself : " I am ashamed to talk with my very maids," says she, " for I don't know

when they do right or wrong. I had more need go to school than be married.”

I need not enlarge on the loss the defect of education is to the sex ; nor argue the benefit of the contrary practice. 'Tis a thing will be more easily granted than remedied. This chapter is but an Essay at the thing ; and I refer the Practice to those Happy Days (if ever they-shall be) when men shall be wise enough to mend it.

JONATHAN SWIFT

(1667-1745)

GULLIVER IN LILLIPUT

OVER against this temple, on the other side of the great highway, at twenty feet distance, there was a turret at least five feet high. Here the emperor ascended, with many principal lords of his court, to have an opportunity of viewing me, as I was told; for I could not see them. When the workmen found it was impossible for me to break loose, they cut all the strings that bound me; whereupon I rose up, with as melancholy a disposition as ever I had in my life. But the noise and astonishment of the people at seeing me rise and walk are not to be expressed.

The emperor descended from the tower, and advanced on horseback towards me, which had like to have cost him dear; for the beast, though very well trained, yet wholly unused to such a sight, which appeared as if a mountain moved before him, reared up on his hinder-feet; but that prince, who is an excellent horseman, kept his seat, till his attendants ran in and held the bridle, while his majesty had time to dismount. When he alighted, he surveyed me round with great admiration; but kept without the length of

my chain. The empress and young princes of the blood of both sexes, attended by many ladies, sate at some distance in their chairs; but upon the accident that happened to the emperor's horse, they alighted, and came near his person, which I am now going to describe. He is taller, by almost the breadth of my nail, than any of his court; which alone is enough to strike an awe into the beholders. His features are strong and masculine, with an Austrian lip and arched nose, his complexion olive, his countenance erect, his body and limbs well proportioned, all his motions graceful, and his deportment majestic. He was then past his prime, being twenty-eight years and three quarters old, of which he had reigned about seven in great felicity, and generally victorious. For the better convenience of beholding him, I lay on my side, so that my face was parallel to his, and he stood but three yards off; however, I have had him since many times in my hand, and therefore cannot be deceived in the description. His dress was very plain and simple, and the fashion of it between the Asiatic and the European; but he had on his head a light helmet of gold, adorned with jewels, and a plume on the crest. He held his sword drawn in his hand to defend himself, if I should happen to break loose; it was almost three inches long; the hilt and scabbard were gold enriched with diamonds. His voice was shrill, but very clear and articulate, and I could distinctly hear it when I stood up. The ladies and courtiers were all most magnificently clad; so that the spot they stood upon seemed to resemble a petticoat spread on the ground, embroidered with figures of gold and silver. His imperial majesty spoke often

to me, and I returned answers, but neither of us could understand a syllable.

After about two hours the court retired, and I was left with a strong guard, to prevent the impertinence, and probably the malice, of the rabble, who were very impatient to crowd about me as near as they durst; and some of them had the impudence to shoot their arrows at me, as I sate on the ground by the door of my house, whereof one very narrowly missed my left eye. But the colonel ordered six of the ringleaders to be seized, and thought no punishment so proper, as to deliver them bound into my hands; which some of his soldiers accordingly did, pushing them forward with the but-ends of their pikes into my reach. I took them all in my right hand, put five of them into my coat-pocket, and as to the sixth, I made a countenance as if I would eat him alive. The poor man squalled terribly, and the colonel and his officers were in much pain, especially when they saw me take out my penknife; but I soon put them out of fear; for, looking mildly, and immediately cutting the strings he was bound with, I set him gently on the ground, and away he ran. I treated the rest in the same manner, taking them one by one out of my pocket; and I observed both the soldiers and people were highly obliged at this mark of my clemency, which was represented very much to my advantage at court.

OF COMMONPLACE BOOKS

If a rational man reads an excellent author with just application, he shall find himself extremely

improved, and perhaps insensibly led to imitate that author's perfections, although in a little time he should not remember one word in the book, nor even the subject it handled: for books give the same turn to our thoughts and way of reasoning, that good and ill company do to our behaviour and conversation; without either loading our memories, or making us even sensible of the change. And particularly I have observed in preaching that no men succeed better, than those who trust entirely to the stock or fund of their own reason, advanced indeed, but not overlaid, by commerce with books. Whoever only reads in order to transcribe wise and shining remarks, without entering into the genius and spirit of the author, as it is probable he will make no very judicious extract, so he will be apt to trust to that collection in all his compositions, and be misled out of the regular way of thinking, in order to introduce those materials, which he has been at the pains to gather; and the product of all this will be found a manifest incoherent piece of patchwork.

RAILLERY

Raillery is the finest part of conversation; but as it is our usual custom to counterfeit and adulterate whatever is too dear for us, so we have done with this, and turned it all into what is generally called repartee, or being smart; just as when an expensive fashion comes up, those who are not able to reach it, content themselves with some paltry imitation. It now passes for raillery to run a man down in discourse, to put him out of countenance, and make

him ridiculous ; sometimes to expose the defects of his person or understanding ; on all which occasions, he is obliged not to be angry, to avoid the imputation of not being able to take a jest. It is admirable to observe one who is dexterous at this art, singling out a weak adversary, getting the laugh on his side, and then carrying all before him. The French, from whence we borrow the word, have a quite different idea of the thing, and so had we in the politer age of our fathers. Raillery was to say something that at first appeared a reproach or reflection, but, by some turn of wit, unexpected and surprising, ended always in a compliment, and to the advantage of the person it was addressed to. And surely one of the best rules in conversation is never to say a thing which any of the company can reasonably wish we had rather left unsaid ; nor can there anything be well more contrary to the ends for which people meet together, than to part unsatisfied with each other or themselves.

There is a sort of rude familiarity, which some people, by practising among their intimates, have introduced into their general conversation, and would have it pass for innocent freedom or humour ; which is a dangerous experiment in our northern climate, where all the little decorum and politeness we have are purely forced by art, and are so ready to lapse into barbarity.

FRANCIS ATTERBURY

(1672-1732)

LETTER TO AN INVALID
DAUGHTER

MY DEAR HEART,—I have so much to say to you, that I can hardly say anything to you till I see you. My heart is full; but it is in vain to begin upon paper what I can never end. I have a thousand desires to see you, which are checked by a thousand fears lest any ill accident should happen to you in the journey. God preserve you in every step of it, and send you safe hither! And I will endeavour, by his blessing and assistance, to send you well back again, and to accompany you in the journey, as far as the law of England will suffer me,¹ I stay here only to receive and take care of you (for no other view should have hindered my coming into the North of France this autumn); and I live only to help towards lengthening your life, and rendering it, if I can, more agreeable unto you: for I see not of what use I am, or can be, in other respects. I shall be impatient till I hear you are safely landed, and as impatient after that till

¹ Bishop Atterbury was banished as a Jacobite conspirator in 1723.

you are safely arrived in your winter quarters. God, I hope, will favour you with good weather, and all manner of good accidents on the way ; and I will take care, my dear love, to make you as easy and happy as I can at the end of your journey.

I have written to Mr. Morice about everything I can think of relating to your accommodation on the road, and shall not therefore repeat any part of it in this letter, which is intended only to acknowledge a mistake under which I find myself. I thought I loved you before as much as I could possibly. But I feel such new degrees of tenderness arising in me upon this terrible long journey, as I was never before acquainted with.

God will reward you, I hope, for your piety to me, which had, I doubt not, its share in producing this resolution, and will in rewarding you, reward me also ; that being the chief thing I have to beg of Him.

Adieu, my dear heart, till I see you ! and till then satisfy yourself that, whatever uneasiness your journey may give you, my expectation of you, and concern for you, will give me more. I am got to another page, and must do violence to myself to stop here— But I will—and abruptly bid you, my dear heart, adieu, till I bid you welcome to Montpelier.

RICHARD STEELE

(1671-1729)

AN EARLY GRIEF

THE first sense of sorrow I ever knew was upon the death of my father, at which time I was not quite five years of age; but was rather amazed at what all the house meant than possessed with a real understanding why nobody was willing to play with me. I remember I went into the room where his body lay, and my mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my battledore in my hand, and fell a-beating the coffin, and calling "Papa"; for, I knew not how, I had some slight idea that he was locked up there. My mother caught me in her arms, and, transported beyond all patience of the silent grief she was before in, she almost smothered me in her embraces; and told me in a flood of tears, Papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more, for they were going to put him under ground, whence he could never come to us again. She was a very beautiful woman, of a noble spirit, and there was a dignity in her grief amidst all the wildness of her transport; which, methought, struck me with an instinct of sorrow, that, before I was sensible

of what it was to grieve, seized my very soul, and has made pity the weakness of my heart ever since. The mind in infancy is, methinks, like the body in embryo; and receives impressions so forcible, that they are as hard to be removed by reason as any mark with which a child is born is to be taken away by any future application. Hence it is, that good-nature in me is no merit; but having been so frequently overwhelmed with her tears before I knew the cause of any affliction, or could draw defences from my own judgment, I imbibed commiseration, remorse, and an unmanly gentleness of mind, which has since ensnared me into ten thousand calamities; and from whence I can reap no advantage, except it be that, in such a humour as I am now in, I can the better indulge myself in the softnesses of humanity, and enjoy that sweet anxiety which arises from the memory of past afflictions.

SATIRE AND GOOD HUMOUR

The ordinary subjects for satire are such as incite the greatest indignation in the best tempers, and consequently men of such a make are the best qualified for speaking of the offences in human life. These men can behold vice and folly, when they injure persons with whom they are wholly unacquainted, with the same severity as others resent the ills they do to themselves.

There is a certain impartiality necessary to make what a man says bear any weight with those he speaks to. This quality, with respect to men's errors and vices, is never seen but in good-natured

men. They have ever such a frankness of mind, and benevolence to all men, that they cannot receive impressions of unkindness without mature deliberation; and writing or speaking ill of a man upon personal considerations is so irreparable and mean an injury, that no one possessed of this quality is capable of doing it; but in all ages there have been interpreters to authors when living, of the same genius with the commentators into whose hands they fall when dead. The truth of it is, satirists describe the age, and backbiters assign their descriptions to private men.

In all terms of reproof, when the sentence appears to arise from personal hatred or passion, it is not then made the cause of mankind, but a misunderstanding between two persons. For this reason the representations of a good-natured man bear a pleasantry in them which shows there is no malignity at heart, and by consequence they are attended to by his hearers or readers, because they are unprejudiced. This deference is only what is due to him; for no man thoroughly nettled can say a thing general enough to pass off with the air of an opinion declared, and not a passion gratified. I remember a humorous fellow at Oxford, when he heard any one had spoken ill of him, used to say, "I will not take my revenge of him until I have forgiven him." What he meant by this was, that he would not enter upon this subject until it was grown as indifferent to him as any other: and I have by this rule, seen him more than once triumph over his adversary with an inimitable spirit and humour; for he came to the assault against a man full of sore places, and he himself invulnerable.

OF STORY-TELLING

I have often thought that a story-teller is born, as well as a poet. It is, I think, certain that some men have such a peculiar cast of mind, that they see things in another light than men of grave dispositions. Men of a lively imagination and a mirthful temper will represent things to their hearers in the same manner as they themselves were affected by them. Those who are thus adorned with the gifts of nature are apt to shew their parts with too much ostentation; I would therefore advise all the professors of this art never to tell stories but as they seem to grow out of the subject-matter of the conversation, or as they serve to illustrate or enliven it. Stories that are very common are generally irksome; but may be aptly introduced, provided they be only hinted at, and mentioned by way of allusion. It is a miserable thing, after one hath raised the expectation of the company by humorous characters and a pretty conceit, to pursue the matter too far. There is no retreating; and how poor is it for a story-teller to end his relation by saying, "That's all!"

As the telling of stories is a great help and life to conversation, I always encourage them, if they are pertinent and innocent, in opposition to those gloomy mortals who disdain everything but matter of fact. Those grave fellows are my aversion, who sift everything with the utmost nicety, and find the malignity of a lie in a piece of humour pushed a little beyond exact truth. I likewise have a poor opinion of those who have

got a trick of keeping a steady countenance, that cock their hats and look glum when a pleasant thing is said, and ask, "Well, and what then?" Men of wit and parts should treat one another with benevolence; and I will lay it down as a maxim, that if you seem to have a good opinion of another man's wit, he will allow you to have judgment.

JOSEPH ADDISON

(1672-1719)

ON RALLERY

CALISTHENES has great wit accompanied with that quality (without which a man can have no wit at all) a sound judgment. This gentleman rallies the best of any man I know; for he forms his ridicule upon a circumstance which you are in your heart not unwilling to grant him, to wit, that you are guilty of an excess in something which is in itself laudable. He very well understands what you would be, and needs not fear your anger for declaring you are a little too much that thing. The generous will bear being reproached as lavish, and the valiant as rash, without being provoked to resentment against their monitor. What has been said to be the mark of a good writer will fall in with the character of a good companion. The good writer makes his reader better pleased with himself, and the agreeable man makes his friends enjoy themselves, rather than him, while he is in their company. I take it therefore—that to make rallery agreeable, a man must either not know he is rallied, or think never the worse of himself if he sees he is.

WORDS AND IMAGINATION

Words when well chosen, have so great a force in them, that a description often gives us more lively ideas than the sight of things themselves. It may be here worth our while to examine how it comes to pass that several readers, who are all acquainted with the same language and know the meaning of the words they read, should nevertheless have a different relish of the same descriptions. We find one transported with a passage, which another runs over with coldness and indifference; or finding the representation extremely natural, where another can perceive nothing of likeness and conformity. This different taste must proceed, either from the *perfection of imagination* in one more than in another, or from the *different ideas* that several readers affix to the same words. For, to have a true relish, and form a right judgment of a description, a man should be born with a good imagination, and must have well weighed the force and energy that lie in the several words of a language, so as to be able to distinguish which are most significant and expressive of their proper ideas, and what additional strength and beauty they are capable of receiving from conjunction with others. The fancy must be warm to retain the print of those images it hath received from outward objects; and the judgment discerning, to know what expressions are most proper to clothe and adorn them to the best advantage. A man who is deficient in either of these respects, tho' he may receive the general notion of a description, can

never see distinctly all its particular beauties ; as a person with a weak sight may have the confused prospect of a place that lies before him, without entering into its several parts or discerning the variety of its colours in their full glory and perfection.

OMENS

Going yesterday to dine with an old acquaintance, I had the misfortune to find his whole family very much dejected. Upon asking him the occasion of it, he told me that his wife had dreamt a strange dream the night before, which they were afraid portended some misfortune to themselves or to their children. At her coming into the room, I observed a settled melancholy in her countenance, which I should have been troubled for, had I not heard from whence it proceeded. We were no sooner sat down, but, after having looked upon me a little while, "My dear," says she, turning to her husband, "you may now see the stranger that was in the candle last night." Soon after this, as they began to talk of family affairs, a little boy at the lower end of the table told her that he was to go into join-hand on Thursday. "Thursday !" says she. "No, child, if it please God, you shall not begin upon Childermas-day ; tell your writing-master that Friday will be soon enough." I was reflecting with myself on the oddness of her fancy, and wondering that anybody would establish it as a rule to lose a day in every week. In the midst of these my musings, she desired me to reach her a little salt upon the point of my knife, which I did in such a trepidation and hurry of obedience that

I let it drop by the way; at which she immediately startled, and said it fell toward her. Upon this I looked very blank; and observing the concern of the whole table, began to consider myself, with some confusion, as a person that had brought a disaster upon the family. The lady, however, recovering herself after a little space, said to her husband with a sigh, "My dear, misfortunes never come single." My friend, I found, acted but an under part at his table, and being a man of more good-nature than understanding, thinks himself obliged to fall in with all the passions and humours of his yoke-fellow. "Do not you remember, child," says she, "that the pigeon-house fell the very afternoon that our careless wench spilt the salt upon the table?" "Yes," says he, "my dear; and the next post brought us an account of the battle of Almanza." The reader may guess at the figure I made, after having done all this mischief. I despatched my dinner as soon as I could, with my usual taciturnity; when, to my utter confusion, the lady seeing me quitting my knife and fork, and laying them across one another upon my plate, desired me that I would humour her so far as to take them out of that figure, and place them side by side. What the absurdity was which I had committed, I did not know, but I suppose there was some traditionary superstition in it; and therefore, in obedience to the lady of the house, I disposed of my knife and fork in two parallel lines, which is the figure I shall always lay them in for the future, though I do not know any reason for it.

It is not difficult for a man to see that a person has conceived an aversion to him. For my own

part, I quickly found by the lady's looks, that she regarded me as a very odd kind of fellow, with an unfortunate aspect. For which reason I took my leave immediately after dinner, and withdrew to my own lodgings. Upon my return home, I fell into a profound contemplation of the evils that attend these superstitious follies of mankind; how they subject us to imaginary afflictions and additional sorrows that do not properly come within our lot. As if the natural calamities of life were not sufficient for it, we turn the most indifferent circumstances into misfortunes, and suffer as much from trifling accidents as from real evils. I have known the shooting of a star spoil a night's rest; and have seen a man in love grow pale and lose his appetite upon the plucking of a merry-thought. A screech-owl at midnight has alarmed a family more than a band of robbers; nay, the voice of a cricket hath struck more terror than the roaring of a lion. There is nothing so inconsiderable which may not appear dreadful to an imagination that is filled with omens and prognostics. A rusty nail or a crooked pin shoot up into prodigies.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies in me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tomb-stone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves, I consider the vanity of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow; when I see kings

lying by those who deposed them, when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or the holy men that divided the world with their contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates of the tombs, of some that died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day when we shall all of us be contemporaries and make our appearance together.

LADY MARY WORTLEY
MONTAGUE

(1690-1762)

POPE AS TRANSLATOR

You are the three happiest poets I ever heard of; one a secretary of state,¹ the other² enjoying leisure with dignity in two lucrative employments; and you, tho' your religious profession is an obstacle to court promotion, and disqualifies you from filling civil employments, have found the *Philosopher's stone*, since by making the Iliad pass through your poetical crucible into an English form without losing aught of its original beauty, you have drawn the golden current of Pactolus to Twickenham. I call this finding the Philosopher's stone, since you alone found out the secret, and nobody else has got into it. A——n¹ and T——l³ tried it, but their experiments failed; and they lost, if not their money, at least a certain portion of their fame in the trial—while you touched the mantle of the divine Bard, and imbibed his spirit. I hope we shall have the Odyssey soon from your happy hand, and I think I shall follow with singular pleasure

¹ Addison.² Congreve.³ Tickell.

the traveller Ulysses, who was an observer of men and manners, when he travels in your harmonious numbers. I love him much better than the hot-headed son of Peleus, who bullied his general, cried for his mistress, and so on. It is true, the excellence of the Iliad does not depend upon his merit or dignity, but I wish nevertheless that Homer had chosen a hero somewhat less pettish and less fantastick: a perfect hero is chimerical and unnatural, and consequently uninstructive; but it is also true that while the epic hero ought to be drawn with the infirmities that are the lot of humanity, he ought never to be represented as extremely absurd. But it becomes me ill to play the critick.

JOSEPH BUTLER

(1692-1752)

HILLS OF SAND

THE Wise Man observes, that there is a time to speak and a time to keep silence. One meets with people in the world, who seem never to have made the last of these observations. And yet these great talkers do not at all speak from their having anything to say, as every sentence shows, but only from their inclination to be talking. Their conversation is merely an exercise of the tongue; no other human faculty has any share in it. It is strange these persons can help reflecting, that unless they have in truth a superior capacity and are in an extraordinary manner furnished for conversation, if they are entertaining, it is at their own expense. Is it possible, that it should never come into people's thoughts to suspect whether or no it be to their advantage to show so very much of themselves? Oh that you would altogether hold your peace and it should be your wisdom. Remember likewise there are persons who love fewer words, an inoffensive sort of people; and who deserve some regard, though of too still and composed tempers for you. Of this number was the son of Sirach; for he plainly speaks from experience when he says, "As hills of sand are to the steps of the aged, so is one of many words to a quiet man."

LORD CHESTERFIELD

(1694-1773)

SILVERN SPEECH

It is a very true saying, that a man must be born a poet, but that he may make himself an orator ; and the very first principle of an orator is, to speak his own language, particularly, with the utmost purity and elegance. A man will be forgiven even great errors in a foreign language ; but in his own even the least slips are justly laid hold of and ridiculed.

You have with you three or four of the best English authors : Dryden, Atterbury, and Swift ; read them with the utmost care and with a particular view to their language, and they may possibly correct that curious infelicity of diction which you acquired at Westminster. Mr. Harte excepted, I will admit that you have met with very few English abroad who could improve your style ; and with many, I dare say, who speak as ill as yourself, and it may be worse ; you must therefore take the more pains, and consult your authors and Mr. Harte the more. I need not tell you how attentive the Romans and Greeks, particularly the Athenians, were to this object. It is also a study among the

Italians and the French, witness their respective Academies and Dictionaries, for improving and fixing their languages. To our shame be it spoken, it is less attended to here than in any polite country ; but that is no reason why you should not attend to it ; on the contrary, it will distinguish you the more. Cicero says, very truly, that it is glorious to excel other men in that very article in which men excel brutes, speech.

Constant experience has shown me that great purity and elegance of style, with a graceful elocution, cover a multitude of faults in either a speaker or a writer. For my own part, I confess (and I believe most people are of my mind) that if a speaker should ungracefully mutter or stammer out to me the sense of an angel, deformed by barbarisms and solecisms, or larded with vulgarisms, he should never speak to me a second time, if I could help it. Gain the heart, or you gain nothing ; the eyes and the ears are the only road to the heart. Merit and knowledge will not gain hearts, though they will secure them when gained. Pray have that truth ever in your mind.

HENRY FIELDING

(1707-1754)

DINNER UNDER DIFFICULTIES

My wife, who, besides discharging excellently well her own and all the tender offices becoming the female character, who, besides being a faithful friend, an amiable companion, and a tender nurse, could likewise supply the wants of a decrepit husband, and occasionally perform his part, had, before this, discovered the immoderate attention to neatness in Mrs. Francis and provided against its ill consequences. She had found, though not under the same roof, a very snug apartment belonging to Mr. Francis, which had escaped the mop by his wife's being satisfied it could not possibly be visited by gentlefolks.

This was a dry, warm, oaken-floored barn, lined on both sides with wheaten straw, and opening at one end with a green field and a beautiful prospect. Here, without hesitation, she ordered the cloth to be laid, and came hastily to snatch me from worse perils by water than the common dangers of the sea.

Mrs. Francis, who could not trust her own ears, or could not believe a footman in so extraordinary a

phenomenon, followed my wife, and asked her if she had indeed ordered the cloth to be laid in the barn? She answered in the affirmative; upon which Mrs. Francis declared she would not dispute her pleasure, but it was the first time she believed that quality had ever preferred a barn to a house. She showed at the same time the most pregnant marks of contempt, and again lamented the labour she had undergone through her ignorance of the absurd taste of her guests.

At length, we were seated in one of the most pleasant spots, I believe, in the kingdom, and were regaled with our beans and bacon, in which there was nothing deficient but the quantity. This defect was however so deplorable that we had consumed our whole dish before we had visibly lessened our hunger. We now waited with impatience the arrival of our second course, which necessity, and not luxury, had dictated. This was a joint of mutton which Mrs. Francis had been ordered to provide; but when, tired with expectation, we ordered our servants to see for something else, we were informed that there was nothing else; on which Mrs. Francis, being summoned, declared there was no such thing as mutton to be had at Ryde. When I expressed some astonishment at their having no butcher in a village so situated, she answered they had a very good one, and one that killed all sorts of meat in season; beef two or three times a year, and mutton the whole year round; but that it being then beans and peas time, he killed no meat by reason he was not sure of selling it. This she had not thought worthy of communication, any more than there lived a fisherman at next door, who was then provided with plenty of

soles, and whittings, and lobsters, far superior to those which adorn a city feast. This discovery being made by accident, we completed the best, the pleasantest, and the merriest meal, with more appetite, more real solid luxury, and more festivity, than was ever seen in an entertainment at White's.

TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF LIFE

There is another sort of knowledge, beyond the power of learning to bestow, and this is to be had by conversation. So necessary is this to the understanding the characters of men, that none are more ignorant of them than those learned pedants whose lives have been entirely consumed in colleges and among books; for however exquisitely human nature may have been described by writers, the true practical system can be learnt only in the world. Indeed, the like happens in every other kind of knowledge. Neither physic nor law are to be practically known from books. Nay, the farmer, the planter, the gardener, must perfect by experience what he hath acquired the rudiments of by reading. How accurately soever the ingenious Mr. Miller may have described the plan, he himself would advise his disciple to see it in the garden. As we must perceive that, after the nicest strokes of a Shakespeare or a Jonson, of a Wycherly or an Otway, some touches of nature will escape the reader, which the judicious action of a Garrick, of a Cibber, or a Clive, can convey to him; so, on the real stage, the character shows himself in a stronger and bolder light than can be described. And if this be the case in those fine

and nervous descriptions which great authors themselves have taken from life, how much more strongly will it hold when the writer himself takes his lines not from nature, but from books? Such characters are only the faint copy of a copy, and can have neither the justness nor spirit of an original.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

(1709-1784)

TRAVELLING COMPANIONS

IN a stage-coach the passengers are for the most part wholly unknown to one another, and without expectation of ever meeting again when their journey is at an end; one should therefore imagine that it was of little importance to any of them what conjectures the rest should form concerning him. Yet so it is, that as all think themselves secure from detection, all assume that character of which they are most desirous, and on no occasion is the general ambition of superiority more apparently indulged.

On the day of our departure, in the twilight of the morning, I ascended the vehicle with three men and two women, my fellow-travellers. It was easy to observe the affected elevation of mien with which every one entered, and the supercilious civility with which they paid their compliments to each other. When the first ceremony was despatched, we sat silent for a long time, all employed in collecting importance into our faces, and endeavouring to strike reverence and submission into our companions.

It is always observable that silence propogates

itself, and that the longer talk has been suspended, the more difficult it is to find anything to say. We began now to wish for conversation; but no one seemed inclined to descend from his dignity, or first propose a topic of discourse. At last a corpulent gentleman, who had equipped himself for this expedition with a scarlet surtout and a large hat with a broad lace, drew out his watch, looked on it in silence, and then held it dangling at his finger. This was, I suppose, understood by all the company as an invitation to ask the time of day, but nobody appeared to heed his overture; and his desire to be talking so far overcame his resentment, that he let us know of his own accord that it was half past five, and that in two hours we should be at breakfast.

His condescension was thrown away; we continued all obdurate: the ladies held up their heads; I amused myself with watching their behaviour; and of the other two, one seemed to employ himself in counting the trees as we drove by them, the other drew his hat over his eyes and counterfeited a slumber. The man of benevolence, to show that he was not depressed by our neglect, hummed a tune and beat time upon his snuff-box.

Thus universally displeased with one another, and not much delighted with ourselves, we came at last to the little inn appointed for our repast; and all began at once to recompense themselves for the constraint of silence, by innumerable questions and orders to the people that attended us. At last, what every one had called for was got, or declared impossible to be got at that time, and we were persuaded to sit round the same table; when the gentleman in the red surtout looked again upon his watch, told us that we had half an hour to spare,

but he was sorry to see so little merriment among us; that all fellow-travellers were for the time upon the level, and that it was always his way to make himself one of the company. "I remember," says he, "it was on just such a morning as this, that I and my Lord Mumble and the Duke of Tenterden were out upon a ramble; we called at a little house as it might be this; and my landlady, I warrant you, not suspecting to whom she was talking, was so jocular and facetious, and made so many merry answers to our questions, that we were all ready to burst with laughter. At last the good woman happening to overhear me whisper the duke and call him by his title, was so surprised and confounded, that we could scarcely get a word from her; and the duke never met me from that day to this, but he talks of the little house, and quarrels with me for terrifying the landlady."

He had scarcely time to congratulate himself on the veneration which this narrative must have procured him from the company, when one of the ladies, having reached out for a plate on a distant part of the table, began to remark "the inconveniences of travelling, and the difficulty which they who never sat at home without a great number of attendants found in performing for themselves such offices as the road required; but that people of quality often travelled in disguise, and might be generally known from the vulgar by their condescension to poor innkeepers and the allowance which they made for any defect in their entertainment; that for her part, while people were civil and meant well, it was never her custom to find fault, for one was not to expect upon a journey all that one enjoyed at one's own house."

A general emulation seemed now to be excited. One of the men, who had hitherto said nothing, called for the last newspaper, and, having perused it a while with deep pensiveness, "It is impossible," says he, "for any man to guess how to act with regard to the stock; last week it was the general opinion that they would fall; and I sold out twenty thousand pounds in order to a purchase; they have now risen unexpectedly; and I make no doubt but at my return to London I shall risk thirty thousand pounds among them again."

A young man, who had hitherto distinguished himself only by the vivacity of his looks, and a frequent diversion of his eyes from one object to another, upon this closed his snuff-box, and told us, that "he had a hundred times talked with the chancellor and the judges on the subject of the stocks; that for his part he did not pretend to be well acquainted with the principles on which they were established, but had always heard them reckoned pernicious to trade, uncertain in their produce, and unsolid in their foundation; and that he had been advised by three judges, his most intimate friends, never to venture his money in the funds, but to put it out upon land security, till he could light upon an estate in his own country."

It might be expected, that upon these glimpses of latent dignity, we should all have begun to look round us with veneration; and have behaved like the princes of romance, when the enchantment that disguises them is dissolved, and they discover the dignity of each other; yet it happened, that none of these hints made much impression on the company; every one was apparently suspected of

endeavouring to impose false appearances upon the rest ; all continued their haughtiness in hopes to enforce their claims ; and all grew every hour more sullen, because they found their representations of themselves without effect.

Thus we travelled on four days with malevolence perpetually increasing, and without any endeavour but to outtire each other in superciliousness and neglect ; and when any two of us could separate ourselves for a moment, we vented our indignation at the sauciness of the rest.

At length the journey was at an end ; and time and chance, that strip off all disguises, have discovered that the intimate of lords and dukes is a nobleman's butler, who has furnished a shop with the money he has saved ; the man who deals so largely in the funds, is a clerk of a broker in 'Change Alley ; the lady who so carefully concealed her quality, keeps a cook-shop behind the Exchange ; and the young man, who is so happy in the friendship of the judges, engrosses and transcribes for bread in a garret of the Temple. Of one of the women only I could make no disadvantageous detection, because she had assumed no character, but accommodated herself to the scene before her, without any struggle for distinction or superiority.

I could not forbear to reflect on the folly of practising a fraud, which, as the event showed, had been already practised too often to succeed, and by the success of which no advantage could have been obtained ; of assuming a character which was to end with the day ; and of claiming upon false pretences honours which must perish with the breath that paid them.

LETTER TO LORD CHESTERFIELD

MY LORD,—I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of *The World*, that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the publick, were written by your Lordship. To be so distinguished is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

When upon some slight encouragement I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*,—that I might attain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your lordship in publick, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

Seven years, my Lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a Patron before.

The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

Is not a Patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary and cannot impart it; till I am known and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the Publick should consider me as owing that to a Patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation,

My Lord,

Your lordship's most humble,

Most obedient servant

SAM. JOHNSON.

DAVID HUME

(1711-1776)

THE SPIRIT OF INQUIRY

IF we believe that fire warms or water refreshes, 'tis only because it costs us too much pains to think otherwise. Nay, if we are philosophers, it ought only to be upon sceptical principles, and from an inclination which we feel to the employing ourselves after the manner. Where reason is lively and mixes itself with some propensity, it ought to be assented to. Where it does not, it never can have any title to operate upon us.

At the time, therefore, that I am tired with amusement and company, and have indulged a reverie in my chamber, or in a solitary walk by a river side, I feel my mind all collected within itself, and am naturally inclined to carry my view into all those subjects about which I have met with so many disputes in the course of my reading and conversation. I cannot forbear having a curiosity to be acquainted with the principles of moral good and evil, the nature and foundation of government, and the cause of those several passions and inclinations, which actuate and govern me. I am uneasy to think I approve of one object, and disapprove of

another ; call one thing beautiful, and another deformed ; decide concerning truth and falsehood, reason and folly, without knowing upon what principles I proceed. I am concerned for the condition of the learned world, which lies under such a deplorable ignorance in all these particulars. I feel an ambition to arise in me of contributing to the instruction of mankind, and of acquiring a name by my inventions and discoveries. These sentiments spring up naturally in my present disposition ; and should I endeavour to banish them, by attaching myself to any other business or diversion, I feel I should be a loser in point of pleasure ; and this is the origin of my philosophy.

LAURENCE STERNE

(1713-1768)

THE PRISONER

THE bird in his cage pursued me into my room. I sat down close to my table, and leaning my head upon my hand, I began to figure to myself the miseries of confinement. I was in a right frame for it, and so I gave full scope to my imagination. I was going to begin with the millions of my fellow-creatures born to no inheritance but slavery; but finding, however affecting the picture was, that I could not bring it near me, and that the multitude of sad groups in it did but distract me, I took a single captive, and, having first shut him up in his dungeon, I then looked through the twilight of his grated door to take his picture. I beheld his body half wasted away with long expectation and confinement, and felt what kind of sickness of the heart it was which arises from hope deferred. Upon looking nearer, I saw him pale and feverish; in thirty years the western breeze had not once fanned his blood; he had seen no sun, no moon, in all that time, nor had the voice of friend or kinsman breathed through his lattice; his children—but here my heart began to bleed, and I was forced to

go on with another part of the portrait. He was sitting upon the ground upon a little straw, in the farthest corner of his dungeon, which was alternately his chair and bed; a little calendar of small sticks lay at the head, notched all over with the dismal days and nights he had passed there; he had one of these little sticks in his hand, and with a rusty nail he was etching another day of misery to add to the heap. As I darkened the little light he had, he lifted up a hopeless eye towards the door, then cast it down, shook his head, and went on with his work of affliction. I heard his chains upon his legs, as he turned his body to lay his little stick upon the bundle. He gave a deep sigh; I saw the iron enter into his soul. I burst into tears; I could not sustain the picture of confinement which my fancy had drawn.

ORARE ET LABORARE

“‘I thought,’ said the curate, ‘that you gentlemen of the army, Mr. Trim, never said your prayers at all.’ ‘I heard the poor gentleman say his prayers last night,’ said the landlady very devoutly, ‘and with my own ears, or I could not have believed it.’ ‘Are you sure of it?’ replied the curate. ‘A soldier, an’ please your reverence,’ said I, ‘prays as often, of his own accord, as a parson; and when he is fighting for his king, and for his own life, and for his honour too, he has the most reason to pray to God of any one in the whole world.’”

“It was well said of thee, Trim,” said my uncle Toby.

“‘But when a soldier,’ said I, ‘an’ please your reverence, has been standing for twelve hours together in the trenches, up to his knees in cold water, or engaged,’ said I, ‘for months together in long and dangerous marches; harassed, perhaps, in his rear today; harassing others tomorrow; detached here; countermanded there; resting this night out upon his arms; beat up in his shirt the next, benumbed in his joints; perhaps without straw in his tent to kneel on; must say his prayers *how* and *when* he can; I believe,’ said I, for I was piqued,” quoth the corporal, “for the reputation of the army, ‘I believe, an’t please your reverence,’ said I, ‘that when a soldier gets time to pray, he prays as heartily as a parson—though not with all his fuss and hypocrisy.’”

“Thou should’st not have said that, Trim,” said my uncle Toby, “for God only knows who is a hypocrite, and who is not. At the great and general review of us all, corporal, at the day of judgment (and not till then) it will be seen who have done their duties in this world, and who have not; and we shall be advanced, Trim, accordingly.”

“I hope we shall,” said Trim.

“It is in the Scripture,” said my uncle Toby; “and I will show it thee tomorrow. In the meantime we may depend upon it, Trim, for our comfort,” said my uncle Toby, “that God Almighty is so good and just a governor of the world, that if we have but done our duties in it, it will never be inquired into whether we have done them in a red coat or a black one.”

“I hope not,” said the corporal.

THOMAS GRAY

(1716-1771)

ON "NEW" PHILOSOPHY

I AM as sorry as you seem to be, that our acquaintance harped so much on the subject of materialism, when I saw him with you in town, because it was plain to which side of the long debated question he inclined. That we are indeed mechanical and dependent beings, I need no other proof than my own feelings; and from the same feelings I learn, with equal conviction, that we are not *merely* such; that there is a power within that struggles against the force and bias of that mechanism, commands its motion, and by frequent practice reduces it to that ready obedience which we call *Habit*; and all this in conformity to a preconceived opinion (no matter whether right or wrong) to that least material of all agents, a Thought. I have known many in his case who, while they thought they were conquering an old prejudice, did not perceive they were under the influence of one far more dangerous; one that furnishes us with a ready apology for all our worst actions, and opens to us a full license for doing whatever we please; and yet these very people were not at all the more

indulgent to other men (as they naturally should have been); their indignation to such as offended them, their desire of revenge on anybody that hurt them was nothing mitigated; in short, the truth is they wished to be persuaded of that opinion for the sake of its convenience, but were not so in their heart; and they would have been glad (as they ought in common prudence) that nobody else should think the same, for fear of the mischief that might ensue to themselves. His French Author I never saw, but have read fifty in the same strain, and shall read no more. I can be wretched enough without them. They put me in mind of the Greek Sophist, that got immortal honour by discoursing so feelingly on the miseries of our condition that fifty of his audience went home and hanged themselves; yet he lived himself (I suppose) many years after in very good plight.

You say you cannot conceive how Lord Shaftesbury came to be a Philosopher in vogue; I will tell you. First, he was a Lord; 2dly, he was as vain as any of his readers; 3dly, men are very prone to believe what they do not understand; 4thly, they will believe anything at all, provided they are under no obligation to believe it; 5thly, they love to take a new road, even when that road leads nowhere; 6thly, he was reckoned a fine writer, and seemed always to mean more than he said. Would you have any more reasons? An interval of above forty years has pretty well destroyed the charm. A dead Lord ranks but with Commoners; Vanity is no longer interested in the matter, for the new road has become an old one. The mode of free-thinking is like that of Ruffs

and Farthingales, and has given place to the mode of not thinking at all; once it was reckoned graceful half to discover and half conceal the mind, but now we have been long accustomed to see it quite naked; primness and affectation of style, like the good breeding of Queen Anne's Court, has turned to hoydening and rude familiarity.

ON POETS LAUREATE

Though I very well know the bland emollient saponaceous qualities both of sack and silver, yet if any great man would say to me, "I make you rat-catcher to his Majesty, with a salary of £300 a year and two butts of the best Malaga; and though it has been usual to catch a mouse or two, for form's sake, in public once a year, yet to you, sir, we shall not stand upon these things," I cannot say I should jump at it; nay, if they would drop the very name of the office and call me *Sinecure* to the King's Majesty, I should still feel a little awkward, and think everybody I saw smelt a rat about me; but I do not pretend to blame anyone else that has not the same sensations; for my part I would rather be sergeant-trumpeter or pinmaker to the palace. Nevertheless I interest myself a little in the history of it, and rather wish somebody may accept it that will retrieve the credit of the thing, if it be retrievable, or ever had any credit. Rowe was, I think, the last man of character that had it. As to Settle, whom you mention, he belonged to my lord mayor, not to the king. Dryden was as disgraceful to the office, from his character, as the poorest scribbler could have been

from his verses. The office itself has always humbled the professor hitherto (even in an age when kings were somebody), if he were a poor writer, by making him more conspicuous; and if he were a good one, by setting him at war with the little fry of his own profession; for there are poets little enough to envy even a poet-laureate.

PHILOSOPHY AND LIFE

I am very sorry to hear you treat philosophy and her followers like a parcel of monks and hermits, and think myself obliged to vindicate a profession I honour, *bien que je n'en tiennne pas boutique* (as Madame Sévigné says). The first man that ever bore the name, if you remember, used to say that life was like the Olympic games (the greatest public assembly of his age and country), where some came to shew the strength and agility of their body, as the champions; others, as the musicians, orators, poets, and historians, to shew their excellence in those arts; the traders, to get money; and the better sort, to enjoy the spectacle and judge of all these. They did not then run away from society for fear of its temptations; they passed their days in the midst of it; conversation was their business; they cultivated the arts of persuasion, on purpose to shew men it was their interest, as well as their duty, not to be foolish, and false, and unjust; and that, too, in many instances with success; which is not very strange, for they shewed by their life that their lessons were not impracticable; and that pleasures were no temptations but to such as wanted a clear

perception of the pains annexed to them. But I have done preaching *à la Grecque*. Mr. Ratcliffe made a shift to behave very rationally without their instructions, at a season which they took a great deal of pains to fortify themselves and others against; one would not desire to lose one's head with a better grace. I am particularly satisfied with the humanity of that last embrace to all the people about him. Sure it must be somewhat embarrassing to die before so much good company.

You need not fear but posterity will be ever glad to know the absurdity of their ancestors; the foolish will be glad to know there were as foolish as they, and the wise will be glad to find themselves wiser. You will please all the world then; and if you recount miracles you will be believed so much the sooner. We are pleased when we wonder, and we believe because we are pleased. Folly and wisdom, and wonder and pleasure, join with me in desiring you would continue to entertain them; refuse us if you can.

A GARDEN

And so you have a garden of your own, and you plant and transplant, and are dirty and amused; are not you ashamed of yourself? why, I have no such thing, you monster; nor ever shall be either dirty or amused as long as I live! my gardens are in the window, like those of a lodger up three pair of stairs in Petticoat Lane or Camomile Street, and they go to bed regularly under the same roof that I do; dear, how charming it must be to walk out in one's own garden, and sit on a bench in the

open air with a fountain and a leaden statue, and a rolling stone, and an harbour !

CONDOLENCE

I break in upon you at a moment when we least of all are permitted to disturb our friends, only to say that you are daily and hourly present to my thoughts. If the worst be not yet passed, you will neglect and pardon me ; but if the last struggle be over, if the poor object of your long anxieties be no longer sensible to your kindness, or to her own sufferings, allow me (at least in idea, for what could I do were I present, more than this), to sit by you in silence, and pity from my heart, not her who is at rest, but you who lose her. May He who made us, the Master of our pleasures and of our pains, preserve and support you. Adieu !

HORACE WALPOLE

(1717-1797)

THE ENGLISHMAN AND HIS
SUMMER

I PERCEIVE the deluge fell upon you before it reached us. It began here but on Monday last, and then rained near eight-and-forty hours without intermission. My poor hay has not a dry thread to its back. I have had a fire these three days. In short, every summer one lives in a state of mutiny and murmur, and I have found the reason; it is because we will affect to have a summer, and we have no title to any such thing. Our poets learnt their trade of the Romans, and so adopted the terms of their masters. They talk of shady groves, purling streams, and cooling breezes, and we get sore throats and agues with attempting to realise these visions. The best sun we have is made of Newcastle coal, and I am determined never to reckon upon any other. We ruin ourselves with inviting over foreign trees, and making our houses clamber up hills to look at prospects. How our ancestors would laugh at us, who knew there was no being comfortable, unless you had a high hill before your nose, and a thick warm wood at your back! Taste is too

freezing a commodity for us, and, depend upon it, will go out of fashion again.

THE GATE OF INFIRMITY

The less one is disposed, if one has any sense, to talk of oneself to people that inquire only out of compliment, and do not listen to the answer, the more satisfaction one feels in indulging a self-complacency, by sighing to those that really sympathise with our griefs. Do not think it is pain that makes me give this low-spirited air to my letter. No, it is the prospect of what is to come, not the sensation of what is passing, that affects me. The loss of youth is melancholy enough; but to enter into old age through the gate of infirmity is most disheartening. My health and spirits make me take but slight notice of the transition, and under the persuasion of temperance being a talisman, I marched boldly on towards the descent of the hill, knowing I must fall at last, but not suspecting that I should stumble by the way. This confession explains the mortification I feel. A month's confinement, to one who never kept his bed a day, is a stinging lesson, and has humbled my insolence to almost indifference.

Indeed I shall think myself decrepit till I again saunter into the garden in my slippers and without my hat in all weathers—a point I am determined to regain if possible; for even this experience cannot make me resign my temperance and my hardiness. I am tired of the world, its politics, its pursuits, and its pleasures; but it will

cost me some struggles before I submit to be tender and careful. Christ! can I ever stoop to the regimen of old age? I do not wish to dress up a withered person, nor drag it about to public places; but to sit in one's room, clothed warmly, expecting visits from folk I don't wish to see, and tended and flattered by relations impatient for one's death! let the gout do its worst as expeditiously as it can; it would be more welcome in my stomach than in my limbs. I am not made to bear a course of nonsense and advice, but must play the fool in my own way to the last, alone with all my heart, if I cannot be with the very few I wished to see; but to depend for comfort on others, who would be no comfort to me—this surely is not a state to be preferred to death; and nobody can have truly enjoyed the advantages of youth, health, and spirits, who is content to exist without the two last, which alone bear any resemblance to the first.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

(1728-1774)

A TRAVELLING SCHOLAR

I WAS met at the door by a captain of a ship, with whom I had formerly some little acquaintance, and he agreed to be my companion over a bowl of punch. As I never chose to make a secret of my circumstances, he assured me that I was upon the very point of ruin, in listening to the office-keeper's promises; for that he only designed to sell me to the plantations. "But," continued he, "I fancy you might by a much shorter voyage be very easily put into a genteel way of bread. Take my advice. My ship sails to-morrow for Amsterdam; what if you go in her as a passenger? The moment you land, all you have to do is to teach the Dutchmen English, and I warrant you'll get pupils and money enough. I suppose you understand English," added he, "by this time, or the deuce is in it." I confidently assured him of that; but expressed a doubt whether the Dutch would be willing to learn English. He affirmed with an oath that they were fond of it to distraction; and upon that affirmation I agreed with his pro-

posal, and embarked the next day to teach the Dutch English in Holland. The wind was fair, our voyage short, and, after having paid my passage with half my moveables, I found myself, as fallen from the skies, a stranger in one of the principal streets of Amsterdam. In this situation I was unwilling to let any time pass unemployed in teaching. I addressed myself, therefore, to two or three of those I met, whose appearance seemed most promising; but it was impossible to make ourselves mutually understood. It was not till this very moment I recollected, that in order to teach Dutchmen English, it was necessary that they should first teach me Dutch. How I came to overlook so obvious an objection is amazing; but certain it is I overlooked it.

This scheme thus blown up, I had some thoughts of fairly shipping back to England again; but falling into company with an Irish student who was returning from Louvain, our conversation turning upon topics of literature (for, by the way, it may be observed that I always forgot the meanness of my circumstances when I could converse on such subjects), from him I learned that there were not two men in his whole university who understood Greek. This amazed me; I instantly resolved to travel to Louvain, and there live by teaching Greek; and in this design I was heartened by my brother-student, who threw out some hints that a fortune might be got by it.

I set boldly forward the next morning. Every day lessened the burthen of my moveables, like *Æsop* and his basket of bread; for I paid them for my lodgings to the Dutch as I travelled on. When I came to Louvain, I was resolved not to

go sneaking to the lower professors, but openly tendered my talents to the principal himself. I went, had admittance, and offered him my service as a master of the Greek language, which I had been told was a desideratum in his university. The principal seemed, at first, to doubt of my abilities; but of these I offered to convince him, by turning a part of any Greek author he should fix upon into Latin. Finding me perfectly earnest in my proposal, he addressed me thus: "You see me, young man; I never learned Greek, and I don't find that I have ever missed it. I have had a doctor's cap and gown without Greek; I eat heartily without Greek; and, in short," continued he, "as I don't know Greek, I do not believe there is any good in it."

I was now too far from home to think of returning, so I resolved to go forward. I had some knowledge of music, with a tolerable voice; I now turned what was once my amusement into a present means of subsistence. I passed among the harmless peasants of Flanders, and among such of the French as were poor enough to be very merry; for I ever found them sprightly in proportion to their wants. Whenever I approached a peasant's house towards nightfall, I played one of my most merry tunes, and that procured me not only a lodging, but subsistence for the next day. I once or twice attempted to play for people of fashion; but they always thought my performance odious, and never rewarded me even with a trifle. This was to me the more extraordinary, as whenever I used in better days to play for company, when playing was my amusement, my music never failed to throw them

into raptures, and the ladies especially; but as it was now my only means, it was received with contempt; a proof how ready the world is to underrate those talents by which a man is supported.

In this manner I proceeded to Paris, with no design but just to look about me, and then to go forward. The people of Paris are much fonder of strangers that have money than of those that have wit. As I could not boast much of either, I was no great favourite. After walking about the town four or five days, and seeing the outsides of the best houses, I was preparing to leave this retreat of venal hospitality; when, passing through one of the principal streets, whom should I meet but our cousin, to whom you first recommended me! This meeting was very agreeable to me, and I believe not displeasing to him. He inquired into the nature of my journey to Paris, and informed me of his own business there, which was to collect pictures, medals, intaglios, and antiques of all kinds for a gentleman in London, who had just stepped into taste and large fortune. I was the more surprised at seeing our cousin pitched upon for this office, as he himself had often assured me he knew nothing of the matter. Upon asking how he had been taught the art of a *cognoscento* so very suddenly, he assured me that nothing was more easy. The whole secret consisted in a strict adherence to two rules: the one, always to observe that the picture might have been better if the painter had taken more pains; and the other, to praise the works of Pietro Perugino.

PICTURES AND TASTE

My wife and daughters, happening to return a visit at neighbour Flamborough's, found that family had lately got their pictures drawn by a limner, who travelled the country and took likenesses for fifteen shillings a head. As this family and ours had long a sort of rivalry in point of taste, our spirit took the alarm at this stolen march upon us, and, notwithstanding all I could say, and I said much, it was resolved that we should have our pictures done too. Having therefore engaged the limner (for what could I do?) our next deliberation was to shew the superiority of our taste in the attitudes. As for our neighbour's family, there were seven of them, and they were drawn with seven oranges—a thing quite out of taste, no variety in life, no composition in the world. We desired to have something in a brighter style, and after many debates, at length came to a unanimous resolution of being drawn together, in one large historical family-piece. This would be cheaper, since one frame would serve for all, and it would be infinitely more genteel; for all families of any taste were now drawn in the same manner. As we did not immediately recollect an historical subject to hit us, we were contented each with being drawn as independent historical figures. My wife desired to be represented as Venus, and the painter was requested not to be too frugal of his diamonds in her stomacher and hair. Her two little ones were to be as Cupids by her side; while I, in my gown and bands, was to present her with my books on

the Whistonian controversy. Olivia would be drawn as an Amazon, sitting upon a bank of flowers, dressed in a green joseph, richly laced with gold, and a whip in her hand. Sophia was to be a shepherdess, with as many sheep as the painter could put in for nothing; and Moses was to be dressed out with a hat and white feather.

EDMUND BURKE

(1729-1797)

A GREAT IMPERIALIST

My hold of the Colonies is in the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges, and equal protection. These are ties which, though light as air, are as strong as links of iron. Let the Colonists always keep the idea of their civil rights associated with your Government ;—they will cling and grapple to you ; and no force under heaven will be of power to tear them from their allegiance. As long as you have the wisdom to keep the sovereign authority of this country as the sanctuary of liberty, the sacred temple consecrated to our common faith, wherever the chosen race and sons of England worship freedom, they will turn their faces towards you. The more they multiply, the more friends you will have ; the more ardently they love liberty, the more perfect will be their obedience. Slavery they can have anywhere. It is a weed that grows in every soil. They may have it from Spain, they may have it from Prussia. But until you become lost to all feeling of your true interest and your natural dignity, freedom they can have from none

but you. This is the commodity of price of which you have the monopoly. It is the spirit of the English Constitution, which, infused through the mighty mass, pervades, feeds, unites, invigorates, vivifies every part of the empire, even down to the minutest member.

Is it not the same virtue which does everything for us here in England? Do you imagine then, that it is the Land Tax Act which raises your revenue? that it is the annual vote in the Committee of Supply which gives you your army? or that it is the Mutiny Bill which inspires it with bravery and discipline? No! surely no! It is the love of the people; it is their attachment to their government, from the sense of the deep stake they have in such a glorious institution—which gives you your army and your navy, and infuses into both that liberal obedience, without which your army would be a base rabble and your navy nothing but rotten timber.

All this, I know well enough, will sound wild and chimerical to the profane herd of those vulgar and mechanical politicians, who have no place among us; a sort of people who think that nothing exists but what is gross and material; and who therefore, far from being qualified to be directors of the great movement of empire, are not fit to turn a wheel in the machine. But to men truly initiated and rightly taught, these ruling and master principles, which in the opinion of such men as I have mentioned, have no substantial existence, are in truth everything, and all in all. Magnanimity in politicks is not seldom the truest wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together. If we are conscious of our station and glow with zeal

to fill our places as becomes our situation and ourselves, we ought to auspicate all our public proceedings on America with the old warning of the church, *Sursum corda!* We ought to elevate our minds to the greatness of that trust to which the order of Providence has called us. By advertising to the dignity of this high calling, our ancestors have turned a savage wilderness into a glorious empire; and have made the most extensive, and the only honourable conquests, not by destroying, but by promoting the wealth, the number, the happiness, of the human race.

SPECULATION AND PRACTICE

It is very rare indeed for men to be wrong in their feelings concerning public misconduct; as rare to be right in their speculation upon the cause of it. I have constantly observed that the generality of people are fifty years, at least, behindhand in their politicks. There are but very few who are capable of comparing and digesting what passes before their eyes at different times and occasions so as to form the whole into a distinct system. But in books everything is settled for them, without the exertion of any considerable diligence or sagacity. For which reason men are wise with but little reflexion, and good with little self-denial, in the business of all times except their own. We are very uncorrupt and tolerably enlightened judges of the transactions of past ages; where no passions deceive, and where the whole train of circumstances, from the trifling cause to the tragical event, is set in an orderly series before us. Few are the

partizans of departed tyranny; and to be a Whig on the business of an hundred years ago is very consistent with every advantage of present servility. This retrospective wisdom and historical patriotism are things of wonderful convenience; and serve admirably to reconcile the old quarrel between speculation and practice. Many a stern republican, after gorging himself with a full feast of admiration of the Grecian commonwealths and of our true Saxon constitution, and discharging all the splendid bile of his virtuous indignation on King John and King James, sits down perfectly satisfied to the coarsest work and homeliest job of the day he lives in. I believe there was no professed admirer of Henry the Eighth among the instruments of the last King James; nor in the court of Henry the Eighth was there, I dare say, to be found a single advocate for the favourites of Richard the Second.

THE DUTY OF TAKING SIDES

I remember an old scholastic aphorism which says that "the man who lives wholly detached from others must be either an angel or a devil."¹ When I see in any of these detached gentlemen of our times the angelic purity, power, and beneficence, I shall admit them to be angels. In the mean time we are born only to be men. We shall do enough if we form ourselves to be good ones. It is therefore our business carefully to cultivate in our minds, to rear to the most perfect vigour and maturity, every sort of generous and honest feeling that belongs to our nature. To bring the disposi-

¹ Cf. Cowley, p. 106.

tions that are lovely in private life into the service and conduct of the commonwealth; so to be patriots as not to forget we are gentlemen. To cultivate friendships, and to incur enmities. To have both strong, but both selected; in the one, to be placable; in the other, immoveable. To model our principles to our duties and our situation. To be fully persuaded that all virtue which is impracticable is spurious; and rather to run the risque of falling into faults in a course which leads us to act with effect and energy, than to loiter out our days without blame, and without use. Public life is a situation of power and energy; he trespasses against his duty who sleeps upon his watch, as well as he that goes over to the enemy.

HIS SON'S DEATH

The storm has gone over me, and I lie like one of those old oaks which the late hurricane has scattered about me. I am stripped of all my honours; I am torn up by the roots, and lie prostrate on the earth. There, and prostrate there, I most unfeignedly recognise the divine justice, and in some degree submit myself to it. But whilst I humble myself before God, I do not know that it is forbidden to repel the attacks of unjust and inconsiderate men. The patience of Job is proverbial. After some of the convulsive struggles of our irritable nature, he submitted himself, and repented in dust and ashes. But even so, I do not find him blamed for reprehending, and with a considerable degree of verbal asperity, those ill-natured neighbours of his who visited his dunghill to read

moral, political, and economical lectures on his misery. I am alone. I have none to meet my enemies in the gate. Indeed, my lord, I greatly deceive myself, if in this hard season I would give a peck of refuse wheat for all that is called fame and honour in the world. This is the appetite but of a few. It is a luxury; it is a privilege; it is an indulgence for those who are at their ease. But we are all of us made to shun disgrace, as we are made to shrink from pain, and poverty, and disease. It is an instinct; and under the direction of reason, instinct is always in the right. I live an inverted order; they who ought to have succeeded me are gone before me; they who should have been to me as posterity, are in the place of ancestors. I owe to the dearest relation—which ever must subsist in memory—that act of piety which he would have performed to me; I owe it to him to shew, that he was not descended, as the Duke of Bedford would have it, from an unworthy parent.

WILLIAM COWPER

(1731-1800)

AN APPARITION OF MILTON

WHAT would you give to have such a dream about Milton, as I had a week since? I dreamed that, being in a house in the city and with much company, looking towards the lower end of the room from the upper end of it, I descried a figure which I immediately knew to be Milton's. He was very gravely but very neatly attired in the fashion of his day, and had a countenance which filled me with those feelings that an affectionate child has for a beloved father. My first thought was wonder where he could have been concealed so many years; my second, a transport of joy to find him still alive; my third, another transport to find myself in his company; and my fourth, a resolution to accost him. I did so, and he received me with a complacency, in which I saw equal sweetness and dignity. I spoke of his *Paradise Lost* as every man must who is worthy to speak of it at all, and told him a long story of the manner in which it affected me when I first discovered it, being at that time a schoolboy. He answered me by a smile and a gentle inclination of his head. He then

grasped my hand affectionately, and with a smile that charmed me, said, "Well, you for your part will do well also;" at last recollecting his great age, (for I understood him to be two hundred years old,) I feared that I might fatigue him by much talking, I took my leave, and he took his, with an air of the most perfect good breeding. His person, his features, his manner, were all so perfectly characteristic, that I am persuaded an apparition of him could not represent him more completely.

JOHNSON ON MILTON

I have been well entertained with Johnson's biography, for which I thank you; with one exception, and that a swinging one, I think he has acquitted himself with his usual good sense and sufficiency. His treatment of Milton is unmerciful to the last degree. A pensioner is not likely to spare a republican, and the Doctor, in order, I suppose, to convince his royal patron of the sincerity of his monarchical principles, has belaboured that great poet's character with the most industrious cruelty. As a man, he has hardly left him the shadow of one good quality. Churlishness in his private life, and a rancorous hatred of everything royal in his public, are the two colours with which he has smeared all the canvas. If he had any virtues, they are not to be found in the Doctor's picture of him, and it is well for Milton that some sourness in his temper is the only vice with which his memory has been charged; it is evident enough that if his biographer could have discovered more,

he would not have spared him. As a poet, he has treated him with severity enough, and has plucked one or two of the most beautiful feathers out of his Muse's wing, and trampled them under his great foot. He has passed sentence of condemnation upon Lycidas, and has taken occasion, from that charming poem, to expose to ridicule (what is indeed ridiculous enough) the childish prattlement of pastoral compositions, as if Lycidas was the prototype and pattern of them all. The liveliness of the description, the sweetness of the numbers, the classical spirit of antiquity that prevails in it, go for nothing. I am convinced, by the way, that he has no ear for poetical numbers, or that it was stopped by prejudice against the harmony of *Milton's*. Was there ever anything so delightful as the music of the *Paradise Lost*? It is like that of a fine organ; has the fullest and the deepest tones of majesty, with all the softness and elegance of the Dorian flute; variety without end, and never equalled, unless perhaps by Virgil. Yet the Doctor has little or nothing to say upon this copious theme, but talks something about the unfitness of the English language for blank verse, and how apt it is, in the mouth of some readers, to degenerate into declamation. Oh! I could thrash his old jacket till I made his pension jingle in his pockets.

TIME WAS

Let our station be as retired as it may, there is no want of playthings and avocations, nor much need to seek them in this world of ours. Business, or what presents itself to us under that imposing

character, will find us out, even in the stillest retreat, and plead its importance, however trivial in reality, as a just demand upon our attention. It is wonderful how, by means of such real or seeming necessities, my time is stolen away. I have just time to observe that time is short, and by the time I have made the observation, time is gone. I have wondered in former days at the patience of the Antediluvian world; that they could endure a life almost millenary, with so little variety as seems to have fallen to their share. It is probable that they had much fewer employments than we. Their affairs lay in a narrower compass; their libraries were indifferently furnished; philosophical researches were carried on with much less industry and acuteness of penetration, and fiddles, perhaps, were not even invented. How then could seven or eight hundred years of life be supportable? I have asked this question formerly, and been at a loss to resolve it; but I think I can answer it now. I will suppose myself born a thousand years before Noah was born or thought of. I rise with the sun; I worship; I prepare my breakfast; I swallow a bucket of goat's milk, and a dozen good sizeable cakes. I fasten a new string to my bow, and my youngest boy, a lad of about thirty years of age, having played with my arrows till he has stript off all the feathers, I find myself obliged to repair them. The morning is thus spent in preparing for the chase, and it is become necessary that I should dine. I dig up my roots; I wash them; I boil them; I find them not done enough, I boil them again; my wife is angry; we dispute; we settle the point; but in the mean time the fire goes out, and must be kindled again. All this is very

amusing. I hunt; I bring home the prey; with the skin of it I mend an old coat, or I make a new one. By this time the day is far spent; I feel myself fatigued, and retire to rest. Thus what with tilling the ground and eating the fruit of it, hunting, and walking, and running, and mending old clothes, and sleeping and rising again, I can suppose an inhabitant of the primæval world so much occupied as to sigh over the shortness of life, and to find at the end of many centuries that they had all slipt through his fingers and were passed away like a shadow. What wonder then that I, who live in a day of so much greater refinement, when there is so much more to be wanted, and wished, and to be enjoyed, should feel myself now and then pinched in point of opportunity, and at some loss for leisure to fill four sides of a sheet like this? Thus, however, it is, and if the ancient gentlemen to whom I have referred, and their complaints of the disproportion of time to the occasions they had for it, will not serve me as an excuse, I must even plead guilty, and confess that I am often in haste, when I have no good reason for being so.

A CANDIDATE FOR PARLIAMENT

As, when the sea is uncommonly agitated, the water finds its way into creeks and holes of rocks, which in its calmer state it never reaches, in like manner the effect of these turbulent times is felt even at Orchard-side, where in general we live as undisturbed by the political element, as shrimps and cockles that have been accidentally deposited in some hollow beyond the water mark, by the usual

dashing of the waves. We were sitting yesterday after dinner, the two ladies and myself, very composedly, and without the least apprehension of any such intrusion in our snug parlour, one lady knitting, the other netting, and the gentleman winding worsted, when to our unspeakable surprise a mob appeared before the window; a smart rap was heard at the door, the boys halloo'd, and the maid announced Mr. Grenville. Puss was unfortunately let out of her box, so that the candidate, with all his good friends at his heels, was refused admittance at the grand entry, and referred to the back door, as the only possible way of approach.

Candidates are creatures not very susceptible of affronts, and would rather, I suppose, climb in at a window, than be absolutely excluded. In a minute, the yard, the kitchen, and the parlour were filled. Mr. Grenville, advancing toward me, shook me by the hand with a degree of cordiality that was extremely seducing. As soon as he and as many more as could find chairs were seated, he began to open the intent of his visit. I told him I had no vote, for which he readily gave me credit. I assured him I had no influence, which he was not equally inclined to believe, and the less, no doubt, because Mr. Ashburner, the drapier, addressing himself to me at this moment, informed me that I had a great deal. Supposing that I could not be possessed of such a treasure without knowing it, I ventured to confirm my first assertion by saying that if I had any, I was utterly at a loss to imagine where it could be or wherein it consisted. Thus ended the conference, Mr. Grenville squeezed me by the hand again, kissed the ladies, and withdrew. He kissed likewise the

maid in the kitchen, and seemed upon the whole a most loving, kissing, kind-hearted gentleman. He is very young, genteel, and handsome. He has a pair of very good eyes in his head, which, not being sufficient, as it should seem, for the many nice and difficult purposes of a senator, he has a third also, which he wore suspended by a ribband from his buttonhole. The boys halloo'd, the dogs barked, Puss scampered, the hero, with his long train of obsequious followers, withdrew. We made ourselves very merry with the adventure, and in a short time settled into our former tranquillity, never probably to be thus interrupted more.

EDWARD GIBBON

(1737-1794)

THE PLEASURES OF A LITERARY
LIFE

I AM disgusted with the affectation of men of letters who complain that they have renounced a substance for a shadow; and that their fame (which sometimes is no insupportable weight), affords a poor compensation for envy, censure, and persecution. My own experience, at least, has taught me a very different lesson. Twenty happy years have been animated by the labour of my history; and its success has given me a name, a rank, a character in the world, to which I should not otherwise have been entitled. The freedom of my writings has indeed provoked an implacable tribe; but as I was safe from the stings, I was soon accustomed to the buzzing of the hornets. My nerves are not tremblingly alive, and my literary temper is so happily framed, that I am less sensible of pain than of pleasure. The rational pride of an author may be offended rather than flattered by vague indiscriminate praise; but he cannot, he should not, be indifferent to the fair testimonies of private and public esteem. Even his moral sympathy may be

gratified by the idea that now, in the present hour, he is imparting some degree of amusement or knowledge to his friends in a distant land ; that one day his mind will be familiar to the grand-children of those who are yet unborn. I cannot boast of the friendship or favour of princes ; the patronage of English literature has long since been devolved on our booksellers, and the measure of their liberality is the least ambiguous test of our common success. Perhaps the golden mediocrity of my fortune has contributed to fortify my application.

The present is a fleeting moment, the past is no more ; and our prospect of futurity is dark and doubtful. This day may possibly be my last ; but the laws of probability, so true in general, so fallacious in particular, still allow me about fifteen years. I shall soon enter into the period which, as the most agreeable of his long life, was selected by the judgment and experience of the sage Fontenelle. His choice is approved by the eloquent historian of nature, who fixes our moral happiness to the mature season in which our passions are supposed to have calmed, our duties fulfilled, our ambition satisfied, our fame and fortune established on a solid basis. In private conversation, that great and amiable man added the weight of his own experience ; and this autumnal felicity might be exemplified in the lives of Voltaire, Hume, and many other men of letters. I am far more inclined to embrace than to dispute this comfortable doctrine. I will not suppose any premature decay of the mind or body ; but I must reluctantly observe that two causes, the abbreviation of time, and the failure of hope, will always tinge with a browner shade the evening of life.

JAMES BOSWELL

(1740-1795)

HIS INTRODUCTION TO JOHNSON

At last, on Monday the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back parlour, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop; and Mr. Davies having perceived him through the glass-door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing towards us,—he announced his awful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, "Look, my lord, it comes." I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, soon after he had published his Dictionary, in the attitude of sitting in his easy-chair in deep meditation; which was the first picture his friend did for him. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, "Don't tell where I come from." "From Scotland," cried Davies, roguishly. "Mr. Johnson," said I, "I do indeed come from Scot-

land, but I cannot help it." I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to soothe and conciliate him, and not as a humiliating abasement at the expense of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression "come from Scotland," which I used in the sense of being of that country; and as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, "That, sir, I find, is what a very great many of your country men cannot help." This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies: "What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams, because he knows the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three shillings." Eager to take any opening to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, "O sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you."—"Sir," said he, with a stern look, "I have known David Garrick longer than you have done: and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject." Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justice of his animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil. I now felt myself much mortified, and began to think that the hope which I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted. And in truth, had not my ardour been uncommonly strong, and my resolution uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have deterred me for ever from

making any further attempts. Fortunately, however, I remained upon the field not wholly discomfited; and was soon rewarded by hearing some of his conversation.

THE HOPEFULNESS OF LIFE

I profess myself to have ever entertained a profound veneration for the astonishing force and vivacity of mind which the *Rambler* exhibits. That Johnson had penetration enough to see, and seeing would not disguise, the general misery of man in this state of being, may have given rise to the superficial notion of his being too stern a philosopher. But men of reflection will be sensible that he has given a true representation of human existence, and that he has, at the same time, with a generous benevolence displayed every consolation which our state affords us; not only those arising from the hopes of futurity, but such as may be attained in the immediate progress through life. He has not depressed the soul to despondency and indifference. He has every where inculcated study, labour, and exertion. Nay, he has shewn, in a very odious light, a man whose practice is to go about darkening the views of others, by perpetual complaints of evil, and awakening those considerations of danger and distress, which are, for the most part, lulled into a quiet oblivion.

FRIENDSHIP THE WINE OF LIFE

I have often thought that, as longevity is generally desired, and I believe generally expected, it would be wise to be continually adding to the number of our friends, that the loss of some may be supplied by others. Friendship, "the wine of life," should, like a well-stocked cellar, be thus continually renewed; and it is consolatory to think that, although we can seldom add what will equal the generous *first-growths* of our youth, yet friendship becomes insensibly old in much less time than is commonly imagined, and not many years are required to make it very mellow and pleasant. *Warmth* will, no doubt, make a considerable difference. Men of affectionate temper and bright fancy will coalesce a great deal sooner than those who are cold and dull.

The proposition which I have now endeavoured to illustrate was, at a subsequent period of his life, the opinion of Johnson himself. He said to Sir Joshua Reynolds, "If a man does not make new acquaintance as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone. A man, Sir, should keep his friendship *in constant repair*."

LETTERS OF JUNIUS

(1769)

TO THE KING

You have still an honourable part to act. The affections of your subjects may still be recovered. But before you subdue their hearts, you must gain a noble victory over your own. Discard those little personal resentments which have too long directed your public conduct. Pardon this man¹ the remainder of his punishment; and if resentment still prevails, make it—what it should have been long since—an act not of mercy, but of contempt. He will soon fall back into his natural station—a silent senator, and hardly supporting the weekly eloquence of a newspaper. The gentle breath of peace would leave him on the surface, neglected and unremoved; it is only the tempest that lifts him from his place.

Without consulting your minister, call together your whole council. Let it appear to the public that you can determine and act for yourself. Come forward to your people; lay aside the wretched formalities of a king, and speak to your subjects with the spirit of a man, and in the language of

¹ John Wilkes.

a gentleman. Tell them you have been fatally deceived ; the acknowledgment will be no disgrace, but rather an honour to your understanding. Tell them you are determined to remove every cause of complaint against your government ; that you will give your confidence to no man that does not possess the confidence of your subjects ; and leave it to themselves to determine, by their conduct at a future election, whether or not it be in reality the general sense of the nation, that their rights have been arbitrarily invaded by the present House of Commons, and the constitution betrayed. They will then do justice to their representatives and to themselves.

These sentiments, Sir, and the style they are conveyed in, may be offensive, perhaps, because they are new to you. Accustomed to the language of courtiers, you measure their affections by the vehemence of their expressions : and when they only praise you indirectly, you admire their sincerity. But this is not a time to trifle with your fortune. They deceive you, Sir, who tell you that you have many friends whose affections are founded upon a principle of personal attachment. The first foundation of friendship is not the power of conferring benefits, but the equality with which they are received, and may be returned. The fortune which made you a king, forbade you to have a friend ; it is a law of nature, which cannot be violated with impunity. The mistaken prince who looks for friendship will find a favourite, and in that favourite the ruin of his affairs.

The people of England are loyal to the house of Hanover, not from a vain preference of one family to another, but from a conviction that the establish-

ment of that family was necessary to the support of their civil and religious liberties. This, Sir, is a principle of allegiance equally solid and rational; fit for Englishmen to adopt, and well worthy of Your Majesty's encouragement. We cannot long be deluded by nominal distinctions. The name of Stuart of itself is only contemptible: armed with the sovereign authority, their principles are formidable. The prince who imitates their conduct should be warned by their example; and while he plumes himself upon the security of his title to the crown, should remember that as it was acquired by one resolution, it may be lost by another.

SAMUEL ROGERS

(1763-1855)

THE RELATIVITY OF MORALS¹

Laws create a habit of self-restraint, not only by the influence of fear, but by regulating in its exercise the passion of revenge. If they overawe the bad by the prospect of a punishment certain and well-defined, they console the injured by the infliction of that punishment; and as the infliction is a public act, it excites and entails no enmity. The laws are offended; and the community for its own sake pursues and overtakes the offender; often without the concurrence of the sufferer, sometimes against his wishes.

Now those who were not born, like ourselves, to such advantages, we should surely rather pity than hate; and when at length they venture to turn against their rulers, we should lament, not wonder at their excesses; remembering that nations are naturally patient and long-suffering, and seldom rise in rebellion till they are so degraded by a bad government as to be almost incapable of a good one.

Nor should we require from those who are in an earlier stage of society what belongs to a later. They are only where we once were; and why

¹ Cf. Martineau, p. 293.

hold them in derision? It is their business to cultivate the inferior arts before they think of the more refined; and in many of the last what are we as a nation, when compared to others that have passed away? Unfortunately it is too much the practice of governments to nurse and keep alive in the governed their national prejudices. It withdraws their attention from what is passing at home, and makes them better tools in the hands of Ambition. Hence next-door neighbours are held up to us from our childhood as *natural enemies*; and we are urged on like curs to worry each other.

In like manner we should learn to be just to individuals. Who can say, "In such circumstances I should have done otherwise"? Who, did he but reflect by what slow gradations, often by how many strange occurrences, we are led astray; with how much reluctance, how much agony, how many efforts to escape, how many self-accusations, how many sighs, how many tears— Who, did he but reflect for a moment, would have the heart to cast a stone? Are we not also unjust to ourselves; and are not the best among us the most so? Many a good deed is done by us and forgotten. Our benevolent feelings are indulged, and we think no more of it. But is it so when we err? And when we wrong another and cannot redress the wrong, where are we then? Yet so it is and so no doubt it should be, to urge us on without ceasing, in this place of trial and discipline,

From good to better and to better still.

Fortunately these things are known to Him from whom no secrets are hidden; and let us rest in the assurance that His judgments are not as ours are.

FRANCES BURNEY

(1752-1840)

ON BURKE'S SPEECH AGAINST
WARREN HASTINGS

His opening had struck me with the highest admiration of his powers, from the eloquence, the imagination, the fire, the diversity of expression, and the ready flow of language, with which he seemed gifted, in a most superior manner, for any and every purpose to which rhetoric could lead. And when he came to his two narratives, when he related the particulars of those dreadful murders, he interested, he engaged, he at last overpowered me; I felt my cause lost, I could hardly keep on my seat. My eyes dreaded a single glance towards a man so accused as Mr. Hastings; I wanted to sink on the floor, that they might be saved so painful a sight. I had no hope that he could clear himself; not another wish in his favour remained. But when from this narration Mr. Burke proceeded to his own comments and declamation—when the charges of rapacity, cruelty, tyranny, were general, and made with all the violence of personal detestation, and continued and aggravated without any further fact or illustration;

then there appeared more of study than of truth, more of invective than of justice; and in a very short time I began to lift up my head, my seat was no longer uneasy, my eyes were indifferent which way they looked, or what object caught them; and before I was myself aware of the declension of Mr. Burke's powers over my feelings, I found myself a mere spectator in a public place, and looking all around me, with my opera-glass in my hand.

WILLIAM COBBETT

(1762-1835)

HAWKLEY HANGER

ON we trotted up this pretty green lane; and indeed we had been coming gently and generally *up hill* for a good while. The lane was between highish banks and pretty high stuff growing on the banks, so that we could see no distance from us, and could receive not the smallest hint of what was so near at hand. The lane had a little turn towards the end; so that out we came, all in a moment, at the very *edge of the hanger*! And never in all my life was I so surprised and so delighted! I pulled up my horse and sat and looked; and it was like looking from the top of a castle down into the sea, except that the valley was land and not water. I looked at my servant to see what effect this unexpected sight had upon him. His surprise was as great as mine, though he had been bred amongst the North Hampshire hills. Those who had so strenuously dwelt on the dirt and dangers of this route had said not a word about the beauties, the matchless beauties of the scenery. These hangers are *woods* on the sides of *very steep hills*. The trees and underwood *hang* in some sort,

to the ground, instead of *standing on* it. Hence these places are called *Hangers*.

Men, however, are not to have such beautiful views as this without some *trouble*. We had had the view ; but we had *to go down the hanger*. We had indeed some roads to get along as we could afterwards ; but we had to get down the hanger *first*. The horses took the lead, and crept down partly upon their feet and partly upon their hocks. When we got to the bottom, I bid my man, when he should go back to Uphusband, tell the people there that Ashmansworth Lane is not the worst piece of road in the world.

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

We went a little out of the way to go to a place called the *Bourne*, which lies in the heath at about a mile from Farnham. It is a winding narrow valley, down which, during the wet season of the year, there runs a stream beginning at the *Holt Forest*, and emptying itself into the *Wey* just below Moor-Park, which was the seat of *Sir William Temple* when *Swift* was residing with him. We went to this Bourne in order that I might show my son the spot where I received the rudiments of my education. There is a little hop-garden in which I used to work when from eight to ten years old ; from which I have scores of times run to follow the hounds, leaving the hoe to do the best that it could to destroy the weeds ; but the most interesting thing was a *sand-hill* which goes from a part of the heath down to the rivulet. As a due mixture of pleasure with toil, I, with two brothers, used occasionally

to *desport* ourselves, as the lawyers call it, at this sand-hill. Our diversion was this: we used to go to the top of the hill, which was steeper than the roof of a house; one used to draw his arms out of the sleeves of his smock-frock, and lay himself down with his arms by his sides; and then the others, one at head and the other at feet, sent him rolling down the hill like a barrel or a log of wood. By the time he got to the bottom, his hair, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth were all full of this loose sand; then the others took their turn, and at every roll, there was a monstrous spell of laughter. I had often told my sons of this while they were very little, and I now took one of them to see the spot. But that was not all. This was the spot where I was receiving my *education*; and this was the sort of education; and I am perfectly satisfied that if I had not received such an education or something very much like it; that if I had been brought up a milksop, with a nursery-maid everlastingly at my heels; I should have been at this day as great a fool, as inefficient a mortal, as any of those frivolous idiots that are turned out from Winchester and Westminster School, or from any of those dens of dunces called Colleges and Universities. It is impossible to say how much I owe to that sand-hill; and I went to return it my thanks for the ability which it probably gave me to be one of the greatest terrors, to one of the greatest and most powerful bodies of knaves and fools, that ever were permitted to afflict this or any other country.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

(1771-1832)

DEATH APPROACHING BY STRAW-
BREADTHS

THE fanatics ranged themselves around a large oaken table, placing Morton amongst them bound and helpless, in such a manner as to be opposite to the clock which was to strike his knell. Food was placed before them, of which they offered their intended victim a share; but, it will readily be believed, he had little appetite. When this was removed, the party resumed their devotions. Macbriar, whose fierce zeal did not perhaps exclude some feelings of doubt and compunction, began to expostulate in prayer, as if to wring from the Deity a signal that the bloody sacrifice they proposed was an acceptable service. The eyes and ears of his hearers were anxiously strained as if to gain some sight or sound, which might be converted or wrested into a type of approbation, and ever and anon dark looks were turned on the dial-plate of the time-piece to watch its progress towards the moment of execution.

Morton's eye frequently took the same course, with the sad reflection that there appeared no

possibility of his life being expanded beyond the narrow segment which the index had yet to travel on the circle until it arrived at the fatal hour. Faith in his religion, with a constant unyielding principle of honour and the sense of conscious innocence, enabled him to pass through this dreadful interval with less agitation than he himself could have expected, had the situation been prophesied to him. Yet there was a want of that eager and animating sense of right which supported him in similar circumstances, when in the power of Claverhouse. Then he was conscious that amid the spectators were many who were lamenting his condition and some who applauded his conduct. But now, among these pale-eyed and ferocious zealots, whose hardened brows were soon to be bent, not merely with indifference, but with triumph, upon his execution; without a friend to speak a kindly word, or give a look either of sympathy or encouragement,—awaiting till the sword destined to slay him crept out of the scabbard gradually, and as it were by straw-breadths, and condemned to drink the bitterness of death drop by drop,—it is no wonder that his feelings were less composed than they had been on any former occasion of danger. His destined executioners, as he gazed around them, seemed to alter their forms and features, like spectres in a feverish dream; their figures became larger, and their faces more disturbed; and as an excited imagination predominated over the realities which his eyes received, he could have thought himself surrounded rather by a band of demons than of human beings; the walls seemed to drop with blood, and the light tick of the clock thrilled on

his ear with such loud painful distinctness, as if each sound were the prick of a bodkin inflicted on the naked nerve of the organ.

It was with pain that he felt his mind wavering while on the brink between this and the future world. He made a strong effort to compose himself to devotional exercises, and unequal during that fearful strife of nature to arrange his own thoughts into suitable expressions, he had instinctively recourse to the petition for deliverance and for composure of spirit which is to be found in the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England. Macbriar, whose family were of that persuasion, instantly recognised the words, which the unfortunate prisoner pronounced half aloud.

“There lacked but this,” he said, his pale cheek kindling with resentment, “to root out my carnal reluctance to see his blood spilt. He is a prelatist, who has sought the camp under the disguise of an Erastian, and all, and more than all, that has been said of him must needs be verity. His blood be on his head, the deceiver! let him go down to Tophet, with the ill-mumbled mass which he calls a prayer-book in his right hand!”

“I take up my song against him!” exclaimed the maniac. “As the sun went back on the dial ten degrees for intimating the recovery of holy Hezekiah, so shall it now go forward, that the wicked may be taken away from among the people, and the Covenant established in its purity.”

He sprang to a chair in an attitude of frenzy, in order to anticipate the fatal moment by putting the index forward; and several of the party began to make ready their slaughter-weapons for immediate

execution, when Mucklewrath's hand was arrested by one of his companions.

"Hist!" he said—"I hear a distant noise."

"It is the rushing of the brook over the pebbles," said one.

"It is the sigh of the wind among the bracken," said another.

"It is the galloping of horse," said Morton to himself, his sense of hearing rendered acute by the dreadful situation in which he stood—"God grant they may come as my deliverers!"

The noise approached rapidly and became more and more distinct.

"It is horse!" cried Macbriar. "Look out and descry who they are."

"The enemy are upon us!" cried one, who had opened the window in obedience to his order.

A thick trampling and loud voices were heard immediately round the house. Some rose to resist and some to escape; the doors and windows were forced at once, and the red coats of the troopers appeared in the apartment.

DOMINIE SAMPSON'S CLOTHES

The fate of Dominie Sampson would have been deplorable had it depended upon any one except Mannering, who was an admirer of originality; for a separation from Lucy Bertram would have certainly broken his heart. MacMorlan had given a full account of his proceedings towards the daughter of his patron. The answer was a request from Mannering to know whether the Dominie still possessed that admirable virtue of taciturnity

by which he was so notably distinguished at Ellangowan. MacMorlan replied in the affirmative. "Let Mr. Sampson know," said the Colonel's next letter, "that I shall want his assistance to catalogue and put in order the library of my uncle the bishop, which I have ordered to be sent down by sea. I shall also want him to copy and arrange some papers. Fix his salary at what you think befitting. Let the poor man be properly dressed, and accompany his young lady to Woodbourne."

Honest MacMorlan received this mandate with great joy, but pondered much upon executing that part of it which related to newly attiring the worthy Dominie. He looked at him with a scrutinizing eye, and it was but too plain that his present garments were daily waxing more deplorable. To give him money, and bid him go and furnish himself, would be only giving him the means of making him ridiculous; for when such a rare event arrived to Mr. Sampson as the purchase of new garments, the additions which he made to his wardrobe by the guidance of his own taste usually brought all the boys of the 'village after him for many days. On the other hand, to bring a tailor to measure him, and send home his clothes as for a schoolboy, would probably give offence. At length MacMorlan resolved to consult Miss Bertram, and request her interference. She assured him that, though she could not pretend to superintend a gentleman's wardrobe, nothing was more easy than to arrange the Dominie's.

"At Ellangowan," she said, "whenever my poor father thought any part of the Dominie's dress wanted renewal, a servant was directed to enter his room by night, for he sleeps as fast as

a dormouse, carry off the old vestment, and leave the new one; nor could any one observe that the Dominie exhibited the least consciousness of the change put upon him on such occasions."

MacMorlan, in conformity with Miss Bertram's advice, procured a skilful artist, who, on looking at the Dominie attentively, undertook to make for him two suits of clothes, one black and one raven-grey, and even engaged that they should fit him—as well at least (so the tailor qualified his enterprise) as a man of such an out-of-the-way build could be fitted by merely human needles and shears. When this fashioner had accomplished his task, and the dresses were brought home, MacMorlan, judiciously resolving to accomplish his purpose by degrees, withdrew that evening an important part of his dress, and substituted the new article of raiment in its stead. Perceiving that this passed totally without notice, he next ventured on the waistcoat, and lastly on the coat. When fully metamorphosed, and arrayed for the first time in his life in a decent dress, they did observe that the Dominie seemed to have some indistinct and embarrassing consciousness that a change had taken place on his outward man. Whenever they observed this dubious expression gather upon his countenance, accompanied with a glance, that fixed now upon the sleeve of his coat, now upon the knees of his breeches, where he probably missed some antique patching and darning, which, being executed with blue thread upon a black ground, had somewhat the effect of embroidery, they always took care to turn his attention into some other channel, until his garments, "by the aid of use, cleaved to their mould." The only remark

he was ever known to make on the subject was that the "air of a town like Kippletringan seemed favourable unto wearing apparel, for he thought his coat looked almost as new as the first day he put it on, which was when he went to stand trial for his licence as a preacher."

JANE AUSTEN

(1775-1817)

AN UNLIKELY HEROINE

No one who had ever seen Catherine Morland in her infancy would have supposed her born to be a heroine. Her situation in life, the character of her father and mother, her own person and disposition, were all equally against her. Her father was a clergyman, without being neglected or poor, and a very respectable man, though his name was Richard, and he had never been handsome. He had a considerable independence, besides two good livings, and he was not in the least addicted to locking up his daughters. Her mother was a woman of useful plain sense, with a good temper, and, what is more remarkable, with a good constitution. She had three sons before Catherine was born; and instead of dying in bringing the latter into the world, as anybody might expect, she still lived on—lived to have six children more—to see them growing up around her, and to enjoy excellent health herself. A family of ten children will be always called a fine family, where there are heads, and arms, and legs enough for the number; but the Morlands had little other right to the word,

for they were in general very plain, and Catherine, for many years of her life, as plain as any. She had a thin awkward figure, a sallow skin without colour, dark lank hair, and strong features; so much for her person, and not less unpropitious for heroism seemed her mind. She was fond of all boys' plays, and greatly preferred cricket, not merely to dolls, but to the more heroic enjoyments of infancy, nursing a dormouse, feeding a canary bird, or watering a rose-bush. Indeed, she had no taste for a garden; and if she gathered flowers at all, it was chiefly for the pleasure of mischief, at least so it was conjectured from her always preferring those which she was forbidden to take. Such were her propensities; her abilities were quite as extraordinary. She never could learn or understand anything before she was taught, and sometimes not even then, for she was often inattentive and occasionally stupid. Writing and accounts she was taught by her father; French by her mother. Her proficiency in either was not remarkable, and she shirked her lessons in both whenever she could. What a strange unaccountable character! for with all these symptoms of profligacy at ten years old, she had neither a bad heart nor a bad temper, was seldom stubborn, scarcely ever quarrelsome, and very kind to the little ones, with few interruptions of tyranny. She was, moreover, noisy and wild, hated confinement and cleanliness, and loved nothing so well in the world as rolling down the green slope at the back of the house.

Such was Catherine Morland at ten. At fifteen appearances were mending; she began to curl her hair and long for balls, her complexion improved,

her features were softened by plumpness and colour, her eyes gained more animation, and her figure more consequence. Her love of dirt gave way to an inclination for finery, and she grew clean as she grew smart; she had now the pleasure of sometimes hearing her father and mother remark on her personal improvement. "Catherine grows quite a good-looking girl; she is almost pretty to-day," were words which caught her ears now and then; and how welcome were the sounds! To look *almost* pretty is an acquisition of higher delight to a girl who has been looking plain the first fifteen years of her life, than a beauty from her cradle can ever receive.

It was not very wonderful that Catherine, who had by nature nothing heroic about her, should prefer cricket, base-ball, riding on horse-back, and running about the country, at the age of fourteen, to books, or at least books of information, for, provided that nothing like useful knowledge could be gained from them, provided they were all story and no reflection, she had never any objection to books at all. But from fifteen to seventeen she was in training for a heroine; she read all such works as heroines must read to supply their memories with those quotations which are so serviceable and so soothing in the vicissitudes of their eventful lives.

So far her improvement was sufficient, and in many other points she came on exceedingly well; for though she could not write sonnets, she brought herself to read them; and though there seemed no chance of her throwing a whole party into raptures by a prelude on the piano-forte of her own composition, she could listen to other people's per-

formance with very little fatigue. Her greatest deficiency was in the pencil—she had no notion of drawing—not enough even to attempt a sketch of her lover's profile, that she might be detected in the design. There she fell miserably short of the true heroic height. At present she did not know her own poverty, for she had no lover to portray. There was not one lord in the neighbourhood; no, not even a baronet. There was not one family among their acquaintance who had reared and supported a boy accidentally found at their door; not one young man whose origin was unknown. Her father had no ward, and the squire of the parish no children.

But when a young lady is to be a heroine, the perverseness of forty surrounding families cannot prevent her. Something must and will happen to throw a hero in her way.

NOVELS

I will not adopt that ungenerous and impolitic custom, so common with novel writers, of degrading, by their contemptuous censure, the very performances to the number of which they are themselves adding: joining with their greatest enemies in bestowing the harshest epithets on such works, and scarcely ever permitting them to be read by their own heroine, who, if she accidentally take up a novel, is sure to turn over its insipid pages with disgust. Alas! if the heroine of one novel be not patronised by the heroine of another, from whom can she expect protection and regard? I cannot approve of it. Let us leave it to the

reviewers to abuse such effusions of fancy at their leisure, and over every new novel to talk in threadbare strains of the trash with which the press now groans. Let us not desert one another ; we are an injured body. Although our productions have afforded more extensive and unaffected pleasure than those of any other literary corporation in the world, no species of composition has been so much decried. From pride, ignorance, or fashion, our foes are almost as many as our readers ; and while the abilities of the nine-hundredth abridger of the History of England, or of the man who collects and publishes in a volume some dozen lines of Milton, Pope, and Prior, with a paper from the Spectator, and a chapter from Sterne, are eulogised by a thousand pens, there seems almost a general wish of decrying the capacity and undervaluing the labour of the novelist, and of slighting the performances which have only genius, wit, and taste to recommend them.

A LESSON IN TASTE

She knew nothing of drawing — nothing of taste ; and she listened with an attention which brought her little profit, for they talked in phrases which conveyed scarcely any idea to her. The little which she could understand, however, appeared to contradict the very few notions she had entertained on the matter before. It seemed as if a good view were no longer to be taken from the top of a high hill, and that a clear blue sky was no longer a proof of a fine day. She was heartily ashamed of her ignorance—a

misplaced shame. Where people wish to attach, they should always be ignorant. To come with a well-informed mind, is to come with an inability of administering to the vanity of others, which a sensible person would always wish to avoid. A woman, especially, if she have the misfortune of knowing any thing, should conceal it as well as she can.

The advantages of natural folly in a beautiful girl have been already set forth by the capital pen of a sister author; and to her treatment of the subject I will only add, in justice to men, that though, to the larger and more trifling part of the sex, imbecility in females is a great enhancement of their personal charms,¹ there is a portion of them too reasonable, and too well-informed themselves, to desire anything more in woman than ignorance. But Catherine did not know her own advantages; did not know that a good-looking girl with an affectionate heart, and a very ignorant mind, cannot fail of attracting a clever young man, unless circumstances are particularly untoward. In the present instance, she confessed and lamented her want of knowledge; declared she would give anything in the world to be able to draw; and a lecture on the picturesque immediately followed, in which his instructions were so clear that she soon began to see beauty in everything admired by him; and her attention was so earnest, that he became perfectly satisfied of her having a great deal of natural taste.

¹ Cf. Defoe, p. 119.

MRS. ELTON ON UPSTARTS

I have quite a horror of upstarts. Maple Grove has given me a thorough disgust to people of that sort; for there is a family in that neighbourhood who are such an annoyance to my brother and sister from the airs they give themselves! Your description of Mrs. Churchill made me think of them directly. People of the name of Tupman, very lately settled there, and encumbered with many low connections, but giving themselves immense airs, and expecting to be on a footing with the old established families. A year and a half is the very utmost that they can have lived at West Hall; and how they got their fortune nobody knows. They came from Birmingham, which is not a place to promise much, you know. One has not great hopes from Birmingham. I always say there is something direful in the sound; but nothing more is positively known of the Tupmans, though a good many things, I assure you, are suspected; and yet by their manners they evidently think themselves equal even to my brother, Mr. Suckling, who happens to be one of their nearest neighbours. It is infinitely too bad. Mr. Suckling, who has been eleven years a resident at Maple Grove, and whose father had it before him—I believe, at least—I am almost sure that old Mr. Suckling had completed the purchase before his death.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

(1770-1850)

POETRY AND SCIENCE

THE knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow-beings. The man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude; the poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science.¹ Emphatically may it be said of the poet, as Shakespeare hath said of man, that he looks before and after. He is the rock of defence for human nature; an upholder and preserver carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate,

¹ Cf. Shelley, p. 266.

of language and manners, of laws and customs; in spite of things silently gone out of mind, and things violently destroyed; the poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth and over all time. The objects of the poet's thoughts are everywhere; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favourite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge—it is as immortal as the heart of man.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

(1772-1834)

GENIUS IS NOT IRRITABLE

THE men of the greatest genius, as far as we can judge from their own works or from the accounts of their contemporaries, appear to have been of calm and tranquil temper in all that related to themselves. In the inward assurance of permanent fame, they seem to have been either indifferent or resigned with regard to immediate reputation. Through all the works of Chaucer there reigns a cheerfulness, a manly hilarity, which makes it almost impossible to doubt a correspondent habit of feeling in the author himself. Shakespeare's evenness and sweetness of temper were almost proverbial in his own age. That this did not arise from ignorance of his own comparative greatness, we have abundant proof in his Sonnets, which could scarcely have been known to Pope, when he asserted that our great bard "grew immortal in his own despite."

In Spenser, indeed, we trace a mind constitutionally tender, delicate, and, in comparison with his three great compeers, I had almost said, effeminate; and this additionally saddened by the unjust persecution of Burleigh, and the severe

calamities which overwhelmed his latter days. These causes have diffused over all his compositions "a melancholy grace," and have drawn forth occasional strains, the more pathetic from their gentleness. But nowhere do we find the least trace of irritability, and still less of quarrelsome or affected contempt for his censurers.

The same calmness and even greater self-possession may be affirmed of Milton, as far as his poems and poetic character are concerned. He reserved his anger for the enemies of religion, freedom, and his country. My mind is not capable of forming a more august conception than arises from the contemplation of this great man in his latter days:—poor, sick, old, blind, slandered, persecuted :

"Darkness before, and danger's voice behind,"

in an age in which he was as little understood by the party for whom, as by that against whom, he had contended, and among men before whom he strode so far as to dwarf himself by the distance ; yet still listening to the music of his own thoughts ; or if additionally cheered, yet cheered only by the prophetic faith of two or three solitary individuals, he did nevertheless

"argue not

Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope ; but still bore up and steer'd
Right onward."

From others only do we derive our knowledge that Milton, in his latter day, had his scorers and detractors ; and, even in his day of youth and hope, that he had enemies would have been unknown to us, had they not been likewise the enemies of his country.

BURKE'S PRESCIENCE

Let the scholar refer to the speeches and writings of Edmund Burke at the commencement of the American War, and compare them with his speeches and writings at the commencement of the French revolution. He will find the principles exactly the same and the deductions the same ; but the practical inferences almost opposite in the one case from those drawn in the other ; yet in both equally legitimate, and in both equally confirmed by the results. Whence gained he this superiority of foresight ? How are we to explain the notorious fact, that the speeches and writings of Edmund Burke are more interesting at the present day than they were found at the time of their first publication ; while those of his illustrious confederates are either forgotten, or exist only to furnish proof that the same conclusion, which one man had deduced scientifically, *may* be brought out by another in consequence of errors that luckily chanced to neutralise each other ? It would be unhandsome as a conjecture, even were it not, as it actually is, false in point of fact, to attribute this difference to deficiency of talent on the part of Burke's friends, or of experience, or of historical knowledge. The satisfactory solution is, that Edmund Burke possessed and had sedulously sharpened that eye which sees all things, actions, and events, in relation to the laws that determine their existence and circumscribe their possibility. He referred habitually to principles. He was a scientific statesman ; and therefore a seer. Wearisome as

Burke's refinements appeared to his parliamentary auditors, yet the cultivated classes throughout Europe have reason to be thankful that

“ he went on refining,
And thought of convincing, while they thought of
dining.”

Our very sign-boards (said an illustrious friend to me) give evidence that there has been a Titian in the world. In like manner, not only the debates in parliament, not only our proclamations and state papers, but the essays and leading paragraphs of our journals, are so many remembrancers of Edmund Burke.

OF GENIUS

To find no contradiction in the union of old and new, to contemplate the Ancient of Days and all His works with feelings as fresh as if all had then sprung forth at the first creative fiat, characterises the mind that feels the riddle of the world, and may help to unravel it. To carry on the feelings of childhood into the powers of manhood, to combine the child's sense of wonder and novelty with the appearances which every day for perhaps forty years had rendered familiar :

“ With sun and moon and stars throughout the year,
And man and woman ” ;

this is the character and privilege of genius, and one of the marks which distinguish genius from talents. And therefore it is the prime merit of genius, and its most unequivocal mode of manifestation, so to represent familiar objects, as to awaken in the minds of others a kindred feeling concerning

them, and that freshness of sensation which is the constant accompaniment of mental, no less than of bodily, convalescence. Who has not a thousand times seen snow fall on water? Who has not watched it with a new feeling from the time that he has read Burns' comparison of sensual pleasure :

“ To snow that falls upon a river,
A moment white—then gone for ever ! ”

In poems, as in philosophic disquisitions, genius produces the strongest impressions of novelty, whilst it rescues the most admitted truths from the impotence caused by the very circumstance of their universal admission. Truths of all others the most awful and mysterious, yet being at the same time of universal interest, are too often considered as *so* true, that they lose all the life and efficiency of truth, and lie bed-ridden in the dormitory of the soul, side by side with the most despised and exploded errors.

THE VALE OF LIFE

The first range of hills that encircles the scanty vale of human life is the horizon for the majority of its inhabitants. On its ridges the common sun is born and departs. From them the stars rise, and touching them they vanish. By the many, even this range, the natural limit and bulwark of the vale, is but imperfectly known. Its higher ascents are too often hidden by mists and clouds from uncultivated swamps, which few have courage or curiosity to penetrate. To the multitude below, these vapours appear, now as the dark haunts of

terrific agents, on which none may intrude with impunity; and now, all a-glow with colours not their own, they are gazed at as the splendid palaces of happiness and power. But in all ages there have been a few who, measuring and sounding the rivers of the vale at the feet of their furthest inaccessible falls, have learnt that the sources must be far higher and far inward; a few who, even in the level streams, have detected elements which neither the vale itself nor the surrounding mountains contained or could supply. How and whence to these thoughts, these strong probabilities, the ascertaining vision, the intuitive knowledge, may finally supervene, can be learnt only by the fact. I might oppose to the question the words with which Plotinus supposes nature to answer a similar difficulty: "Should any one interrogate her, how she works, if graciously she vouchsafe to listen and speak, she will reply, It behoves thee not to disquiet me with interrogatories, but to understand in silence, even as I am silent, and work without words."

SHAKESPEARE AND MILTON

No man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher. For poetry is the blossom and the fragrancy of all human knowledge, human thoughts, human passions, emotions, language. In Shakespeare's poems, the creative power and the intellectual energy wrestle as in a war embrace. Each in its excess of strength seems to threaten the extinction of the other. At length, in the drama they were reconciled, and fought each with its shield before the breast of the other.

Or, like two rapid streams, that at their first meeting within narrow and rocky banks mutually strive to repel each other, and intermix reluctantly and in tumult, but soon finding a wider channel and more yielding shores, blend and dilate, and flow on in one current and with one voice. What then shall we say? even this, that Shakespeare, no mere child of nature; no automaton of genius; no passive vehicle of inspiration possessed by the spirit, not possessing it; first studied patiently, meditated deeply, understood minutely, till knowledge, become habitual and intuitive, wedded itself to his habitual feelings, and at length gave birth to that stupendous power, by which he stands alone, with no equal or second in his own class; to that power which seated him on one of the two glory-smitten summits of the poetic mountain, with Milton as his compeer, not rival. While the former darts himself forth, and passes into all the forms of human character and passion, the one Proteus of the fire and the flood; the other attracts all forms and things to himself, into the unity of his own ideal. All things and modes of action shape themselves anew in the being of Milton; while Shakespeare becomes all things, yet for ever remaining himself. O what great men hast thou not produced, England! my country! Truly, indeed,

Must we be free or die, who speak the tongue,
Which Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold,
Which Milton held. In every thing we are sprung
Of earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

ROBERT SOUTHEY

(1774-1843)

NELSON

THE death of Nelson was felt in England as something more than a public calamity ; men started at the intelligence, and turned pale, as if they heard of the loss of a dear friend. An object of our admiration and affection, of our pride and of our hopes, was suddenly taken from us ; and it seemed as if we had never, till then, known how deeply we loved and revered him. What the country had lost in its great naval hero, the greatest of our own, and of all former times, was scarcely taken into the account of grief. So perfectly, indeed, had he performed his part, that the maritime war, after the battle of Trafalgar, was considered at an end ; the fleets of the enemy were not merely defeated but destroyed ; new navies must be built, and a new race of seamen reared for them, before the possibility of their invading our shores could again be contemplated. It was not, therefore, from any selfish reflection upon the magnitude of our loss that we mourned for him ; the general sorrow was of a higher character. The people of England grieved that funeral ceremonies and public monuments

and posthumous rewards were all that they could now bestow upon him whom the king, the legislature, and the nation, would have alike delighted to honour; whom every tongue would have blessed; whose presence in every village through which he might have passed would have wakened the church bells, have given schoolboys a holiday, have drawn children from their sports to gaze upon him, and "old men from the chimney corner," to look upon Nelson ere they died. The victory of Trafalgar was celebrated, indeed, with the usual forms of rejoicing, but they were without joy; for such already was the glory of the British Navy, through Nelson's surpassing genius, that it scarcely seemed to receive any addition from the most signal victory that ever was achieved upon the seas; and the destruction of this mighty fleet, by which all the maritime schemes of France were totally frustrated, hardly appeared to add to our security or strength; for, while Nelson was living to watch the combined squadrons of the enemy, we felt ourselves as secure as now, when they were no longer in existence.

There was reason to suppose that in the course of nature he might have attained, like his father, to a good old age. Yet he cannot be said to have fallen prematurely whose work was done; nor ought he to be lamented, who died so full of honours and at the height of human fame. The most triumphant death is that of the martyr; the most awful that of the martyred patriot; the most splendid that of the hero in the hour of victory; and if the chariot and the horses of fire had been vouchsafed for Nelson's translation, he could scarcely have departed in a brighter blaze of glory. He has left

us, not indeed his mantle of inspiration, but a name and an example, which are at this hour inspiring thousands of the youth of England ; a name which is our pride, and an example which will continue to be our shield and our strength. Thus it is that the spirits of the great and the wise continue to live and to act after them.

CHARLES LAMB

(1775-1834)

HIS LOVE FOR LONDON

I OUGHT before this to have replied to your very kind invitation into Cumberland. With you¹ and your sister I could gang anywhere; but I am afraid whether I shall ever be able to afford so desperate a journey. Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't much care if I never see a mountain in my life. I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments as any of you mountaineers can have done with dead Nature. The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street; the innumerable trades, tradesmen and customers, coaches, waggons, play houses; all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden; the watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles; life awake, if you awake at all hours of the night; the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street; the crowds, the very dirt and mud, the sun shining upon houses and pavements, the print-shops, the old book-stalls, parsons cheapening books, coffee-houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes—London itself a pantomime and a

¹ Wordsworth.

masquerade—all these things work themselves into my mind, and feed me, without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impels me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much life. All these emotions must be strange to you ; so are your rural emotions to me. But consider what must I have been doing all my life, not to have lent great portions of my heart with usury to such scenes ?

THE RETURN FROM SKIDDAW

We have clambered up to the top of Skiddaw, and I have waded up the bed of Lodore. In fine, I have satisfied myself that there is such a thing as that which tourists call *romantic*, which I very much suspected before ; they make such a spluttering about it, and toss their splendid epithets around them, till they give as dim a light as at four o'clock next morning the lamps do after an illumination. Mary was excessively tired when she got about half-way up Skiddaw, but we came to a cold rill (than which nothing can be imagined more cold, running over cold stones), and with the reinforcement of a draught of cold water she surmounted it most manfully. Oh, its fine black head, and the bleak air atop of it, with a prospect of mountains all about and about, making you giddy ; and then Scotland afar off, and the border countries so famous in song and ballad ! It was a day that will stand out, like a mountain, I am sure, in my life. But I am returned (I have now been come home near three weeks ; I was a month out), and you cannot

.

conceive the degradation I felt at first, from being accustomed to wander free as air among mountains, and bathe in rivers without being controlled by any one, to come home and *work*. I felt very *little*. I had been dreaming I was a very great man. But that is going off, and I find I shall conform in time to that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me. Besides, after all, Fleet Street and the Strand are better places to live in for good and all than amidst Skiddaw. Still, I turn back to those great places where I wandered about, participating in their greatness. After all, I could not *live* in Skiddaw. I could spend a year, two, three years among them, but I must have a prospect of seeing Fleet Street at the end of that time, or I should mope and pine away, I know. Still, Skiddaw is a fine creature.

A WARNING TO TRAVELLERS

The general scope of your letter afforded no indications of insanity, but some particular points raised a scruple. For God's sake don't think any more of "Independent Tartary." What are you to do among such Ethiopians? Is there no *lineal* descendant of Prester John? Is the chair empty? Is the sword unswayed?—depend upon it they'll never make you their king, as long as any branch of that great stock is remaining. I tremble for your Christianity. Read Sir John Mandeville's travels to cure you, or come over to England. There is a Tartar-man now exhibiting at Exeter Change. Come and talk with him, and hear what he says first. Indeed, he is no very favourable

specimen of his countrymen! But perhaps the best thing you can do is to *try* to get the idea out of your head. For this purpose repeat to yourself every night, after you have said your prayers, the words Independent Tartary, Independent Tartary, two or three times, and associate with them the *idea of oblivion* ('tis Hartley's method with obstinate memories), or say Independent, Independent, have I not already got an *independence*? That was a clever way of the old puritans, pun-divinity. My dear friend, think what a sad pity it would be to bury such *parts* in heathen countries, among nasty, unconvertible, horse-belching Tartar people! Some say, they are Cannibals; and then, conceive a Tartar-fellow *eating* my friend, and adding the *cool malignity* of mustard and vinegar! I am afraid 'tis the reading of Chaucer has misled you; his foolish stories about Cambuscan, and the ring, and the horse of brass. Believe me, there are no such things, 'tis all the poet's *invention*; but if there were such darling things as old Chaucer sings, I would *up* behind you on the horse of brass, and frisk off for Prester John's country. But these are all tales; a horse of brass never flew, and a king's daughter never talked with birds! The Tartars, really, are a cold, insipid, smouchy set. You'll be sadly moped (if you are not eaten) among them. Pray *try* and cure yourself. Take hellebore (the counsel is Horace's, 'twas none of my thought originally). Shave yourself oftener. Eat no saffron, for saffron-eaters contract a terrible Tartar-like yellow. Pray, to avoid the fiend. Eat nothing that gives the heart-burn. *Shave the upper lip*. Go about like a European. Read no books of voyages (they are nothing but lies), only

now and then a romance, to keep the fancy *under*. Above all, don't go to any sights of *wild beasts*. *That has been your ruin*. Accustom yourself to write familiar letters, on common subjects, to your friends in England, such as are of a moderate understanding. And think about common things more. I supped last night with Rickman, and met a merry *natural* captain, who pleases himself vastly with once having made a pun at Otaheite in the O. language. 'Tis the same man who said Shakspeare he liked, because he was so *much of the gentleman*. Rickman is a man "absolute in all numbers." I think I may one day bring you acquainted, if you do not go to Tartary first; for you'll never come back. Have a care, my dear friend, of Anthropophagi! their stomachs are always craving. 'Tis terrible to be weighed out at fivepence a pound. To sit at table (the reverse of fishes in Holland) not as a guest but as a meat.

God bless you; do come to England. Air and exercise may do great things. Talk with some minister. Why not your father?

God dispose all for the best. I have discharged my duty.—Your sincere friend, C. LAMB.

THE MACBETH AND LEAR OF SHAKESPEARE

The truth is, the characters of Shakspeare are so much the objects of meditation rather than of interest or curiosity as to their actions, that while we are reading any of his great criminal characters,—Macbeth, Richard, even Iago,—we think not so much of the crimes which they commit, as of the

ambition, the aspiring spirit, the intellectual activity, which prompts them to overleap these moral fences. So little do the actions comparatively affect us, that while the impulses, the inner mind in all its perverted greatness solely seems real and is exclusively attended to, the crime is comparatively nothing. But when we see these things represented, the acts which they do are comparatively everything, their impulses nothing. The state of sublime emotion by which we are elevated by those images of night and horror which Macbeth is made to utter, that solemn prelude with which he entertains the time till the bell shall strike which is to call him to murder Duncan,—when we no longer read it in a book, when we have given up that vantage ground of abstraction which reading possesses over seeing, and come to see a man in his bodily shape before our eyes actually preparing to commit a murder, if the acting be true and impressive, the painful anxiety about the act, the natural longing to prevent it while it yet seems unperpetrated, the too close pressing semblance of reality, give a pain and an uneasiness which totally destroy all the delight which the words in the book convey, where the deed doing never presses upon us with the painful sense of presence : it rather seems to belong to history,—to something past and inevitable, if it has anything to do with time at all. The sublime images, the poetry alone, is that which is present to our minds in the reading.

So to see Lear acted,—to see an old man tottering about the stage with a walking-stick, turned out of doors by his daughters in a rainy night, has nothing in it but what is painful and disgusting. We want to take him into shelter and relieve him.

That is all the feeling which the acting of Lear ever produced in me. But the Lear of Shakespeare cannot be acted. The contemptible machinery by which they mimic the storm which he goes out in, is not more inadequate to represent the horrors of the real elements, than any actor can be to represent Lear; they might more easily propose to personate the Satan of Milton upon a stage, or one of Michael Angelo's terrible figures. The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual; the explosions of his passion are terrible as a volcano; they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that sea, his mind, with all its vast riches. It is his mind which is laid bare. This case of flesh and blood seems too insignificant to be thought on; even as he himself neglects it. On the stage we see nothing but corporal infirmities and weakness, the impotence of rage; while we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear,¹—we are in his mind, we are sustained by a grandeur which baffles the malice of daughters and storms; in the aberrations of his reason, we discover a mighty irregular power of reasoning, immethodised from the ordinary purposes of life, but exerting its powers, as the wind blows where it listeth, at will upon the corruptions and abuses of mankind. What have looks or tones to do with that sublime identification of his age with that of the *heavens themselves*, when in his reproaches to them for conniving at the injustice of his children, he reminds them that “they themselves are old”? What gesture shall we appropriate to this? What has the voice or eye to do with such things? But the play is beyond all art, as the tamperings with it

¹ Cf. Hazlitt, p. 241.

show ; it is too hard and stony ; it must have love-scenes and a happy ending. A happy ending !—as if the living martyrdom that Lear had gone through,—the flaying of his feelings alive,—did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life the only decorous thing for him. If he is to live and be happy after, if he could sustain this world's burden after, why all this pudder and preparation,—why torment us with all this unnecessary sympathy ? As if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station,—as if, at his years and with his experience, anything was left but to die.

WILLIAM HAZLITT

(1778-1830)

DR. JOHNSON AND SHAKESPEARE

SHAKESPEARE's bold and happy flights of imagination were equally thrown away upon our author. According to Dr. Johnson, a mountain is sublime, or a rose is beautiful; for that their name and definition imply. But he would no more be able to give the description of Dover cliff in *Lear*, or the description of flowers in *The Winter's Tale*, than to describe the objects of a sixth sense; nor do we think he would have any very profound feeling of the beauty of the passages here referred to. A stately common-place, such as Congreve's description of a ruin in the *Mourning Bride*, would have answered Johnson's purpose just as well, or better than the first; and an indiscriminate profusion of scents and hues would have interfered less with the ordinary routine of his imagination than Perdita's lines which seemed enamoured of their own sweetness—

“Daffodils

That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
Or Cytherea's breath.”

No one who does not feel the passion which these objects inspire can go along with the imagination which seeks to express that passion and the uneasy sense of delight by something still more beautiful, and no one can feel this passionate love of nature without quick natural sensibility. To a mere literal and formal apprehension, the inimitably characteristic epithet, "violets *dim*," must seem to imply a defect, rather than a beauty; and to any one not feeling the full force of that epithet, which suggests an image like "the sleepy eye of love," the allusion to "the lids of Juno's eyes" must appear extravagant and unmeaning. Shakespeare's fancy lent words and images to the most refined sensibility to nature, struggling for expression; his descriptions are identical with the things themselves, seen through the fine medium of passion; strip them of that connection, and try them by ordinary conceptions and ordinary rules, and they are as grotesque and barbarous as you please.

HAMLET

This is that Hamlet the Dane, whom we read of in our youth, and whom we seem almost to remember in our after years; he who made that famous soliloquy on life; who gave the advice to the players; who thought "this goodly frame, the earth, a steril promontory, and this brave o'erhanging firmament, the air, this majestic roof fretted with golden fire, a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours"; whom "man delighted not, nor woman neither"; he who talked with the gravediggers and moralised on Yorick's skull; the

school-fellow of Rosencrans and Guildenstern at Wittenberg; the friend of Horatio; the lover of Ophelia; he that was mad and sent to England; the slow avenger of his father's death; who lived at the court of Horwendillus five hundred years before we were born, but all whose thoughts we seem to know as well as we do our own, because we have read them in Shakespeare.

Hamlet is a name; his speeches and sayings but the idle coinage of the poet's brain. What, then, are they not real? They are as real as our own thoughts. Their reality is in the reader's mind. It is *we* who are Hamlet.¹ This play has a prophetic truth, which is above that of history. Whoever has become thoughtful and melancholy through his own mishaps or those of others; whoever has borne about with him the clouded brow of reflection, and thought himself "too much i' th' sun"; whoever has seen the golden lamp of day dimmed by envious mists rising in his own breast, and could find in the world before him only a dull blank with nothing left remarkable in it; whoever has known "the pangs of despised love, the law's delay, the insolence of office and the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes"; he who has felt his mind sink within him, and sadness cling to his heart like a malady; who has had his hopes blighted and his youth staggered by the apparitions of strange things; who cannot be well at ease, while he sees evil hovering near him like a spectre; whose powers of action have been eaten up by thought; he to whom the universe seems infinite and himself nothing; whose bitterness of soul makes him careless of consequences, and who goes to a

¹ Cf. C. Lamb, p. 237.

play as his best resource to shove off, to a second remove, the evils of life by a mock representation of them,—this is the true Hamlet.

We have been so used to this tragedy that we hardly know how to criticise it any more than we should know how to describe our own faces. It is the one of Shakespeare's plays that we think of oftenest, because it abounds most in striking reflections on human life, and because the distresses of Hamlet are transferred by the turn of his mind to the general account of humanity. If *Lear* shews the greatest depth of passion, *Hamlet* is the most remarkable for the ingenuity, originality, and unstudied development of character. Shakespeare had more magnanimity than any other poet, and he has shewn more of it in this play than in any other. There is no attempt to force an interest; every thing is left for time and circumstances to unfold; there is no set purpose, no straining at a point. The observations are suggested by the passing scene—the gusts of passion come and go like sounds of music borne on the wind.

CALIBAN

The character of Caliban is generally thought (and justly so) to be one of the author's masterpieces. It is not indeed pleasant to see this character on the stage, any more than it is to see the god Pan personated there. But in itself it is one of the wildest and most abstracted of all Shakespeare's characters, whose deformity whether of body or mind is redeemed by the power and truth of the imagination displayed in it. It is the essence

of grossness, but there is not a particle of vulgarity in it. Shakespeare has described the brutal mind of Caliban in contact with the pure and original forms of nature; the character grows out of the soil where it is rooted uncontrouled; uncouth and wild, uncramped by any of the meannesses of custom. It is "of the earth, earthy." It seems almost to have been dug out of the ground, with a soul instinctively superadded to it answering to its wants and origin. Vulgarity is not natural coarseness, but conventional coarseness, learnt from others, contrary to, or without an entire conformity of natural power and disposition; as fashion is the common-place affectation of what is elegant and refined without any feeling of the essence of it. Schlegel observes that Caliban is a poetical character, and "always speaks in blank verse."

In conducting Stephano and Trinculo to Prospero's cell, Caliban shews the superiority of natural capacity over greater knowledge and greater folly; and in a former scene, when Ariel frightens them with his music, Caliban to encourage them accounts for it in the eloquent poetry of the senses,

"Be not afraid, the isle is full of noises,
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twanging instruments
Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices
That if I then had waked after long sleep,
Would make me sleep again; and then in dreaming.
The clouds methought would open, and shew riches
Ready to drop upon me: when I wak'd
I cried to dream again."

This is not more beautiful than it is true. The poet here shews us the savage with the simplicity of a child, and makes the strange monster amiable.

PUCK AND ARIEL

Puck, or Robin Goodfellow, is the leader of the fairy band. He is the Ariel of *The Midsummer Night's Dream*; and yet as unlike as can be to the Ariel in *The Tempest*. No other poet could have made two such different characters out of the same fanciful materials and situations. Ariel is a minister of retribution who is touched with a sense of pity at the woes he inflicts. Puck is a madcap sprite, full of wantonness and mischief, who laughs at those whom he misleads—"Lord, what fools these mortals be!" Ariel cleaves the air, and executes his mission with the zeal of a winged messenger; Puck is borne along on his fairy errand like the light and glittering gossamer before the breeze. He is indeed a most Epicurean little gentleman, dealing in quaint devices, and faring in dainty delights. Prospero and his world of spirits are a set of moralists; but with Oberon and his fairies we are launched at once into the empire of the butterflies. How beautifully is this race of beings contrasted with the men and women actors in the scene, by a single epithet which Titania gives to the latter, "the human mortals!" It is astonishing that Shakespeare should be considered, not only by foreigners, but by many of our own critics, as a gloomy and heavy writer, who painted nothing but "gorgons and hydras, and chimeras dire."

THE PEACE OF DEATH

To die is only to be as we were before we were born; yet no one feels any remorse, or regret, or repugnance, in contemplating this last idea. It is rather a relief and disburthening of the mind; it seems to have been holiday-time with us then; we were not called to appear upon the stage of life, to wear robes or tatters, to laugh or cry, be hooted or applauded; we had lain *perdus* all this while, snug, out of harm's way; and had slept out our thousands of centuries without wanting to be waked up; at peace and free from care, in a long nonage, in a sleep deeper and calmer than that of infancy, wrapped in the softest and finest dust. And the worst that we dread is, after a short, fretful, feverish being, after vain hopes and idle fears, to sink to final repose again, and forget the troubled dream of life. Ye armed men, knights templars, that sleep in the stone aisles of that old Temple church, where all is silent above, and where a deeper silence reigns below (not broken by the pealing organ), are ye not contented where ye lie? Or would you come out of your long homes to go to the Holy War? Or do ye complain that pain no longer visits you, that sickness has done its worst, that you have paid the last debt to nature, that you hear no more of the thickening phalanx of the foe, or your lady's waning love; and that while this ball of earth rolls its eternal round, no sound shall ever pierce through to disturb your lasting repose, fixed as the marble over your tombs, breathless as the grave that holds you! And thou, oh!

thou, to whom my heart turns, and will turn while it has feeling left, who didst love in vain, and whose first was thy last sigh, wilt not thou too rest in peace (or wilt thou cry to me complaining from thy clay-cold bed) when that sad heart is no longer sad, and that sorrow is dead which thou wert only called into the world to feel.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

(1775-1864)

FAMINE

Rhodope. Never shall I forget the morning when my father, sitting in the coolest part of the house, exchanged his last measure of grain for a chlamys of scarlet cloth fringed with silver. He watched the merchant out of the door, and then looked wistfully into the corn chest. I, who thought there was something worth seeing, looked in also, and finding it empty, expressed my disappointment, not thinking, however, about the corn. A faint and transient smile came over his countenance at the sight of mine. He unfolded the chlamys, stretched it out with both hands before me, and then cast it over my shoulders. I looked down on the glittering fringe and screamed with joy. He then went out; and I know not what flowers he gathered, but he gathered many; and some he placed in my bosom, and some in my hair. But I told him with captious pride, first, that I could arrange them better, and again, that I would have only the white. However, when he had selected all the white, and I had placed a few of them according to my fancy, I told him (rising in my slipper) he might crown

me with the remainder. The splendour of my apparel gave me a sensation of authority. Soon as the flowers had taken their station on my head, I expressed a dignified satisfaction at the taste displayed by my father, just as if I could have seen how they appeared ! But he knew that there was at least as much pleasure as pride in it, and perhaps we divided the latter (alas ! not both) pretty equally. He now took me into the market place, where a concourse of people was waiting for the purchase of slaves. Merchants came and looked at me ; some commending, others disparaging ; but all agreeing that I was slender and delicate, that I could not live long, and that I should give much trouble. Many would have bought the chlamys, but there was something less saleable in the child and flowers.

Æsop. Had thy features been coarse and thy voice rustic, they would all have patted thy cheeks and found no fault in thee.

Rhodope. As it was, every one had bought exactly such another in time past, and been a loser by it. At these speeches I perceived the flowers tremble slightly on my bosom, from my father's agitation. Although he scoffed at them, knowing my healthiness, he was troubled internally, and said many short prayers, not very unlike imprecations, turning his head aside. Proud was I, prouder than ever, when at last several talents were offered for me, and by the very man who in the beginning had undervalued me the most, and prophesied the worst of me. My father scowled at him and refused the money. I thought he was playing a game, and began to wonder what it could be, since I had never seen it played before. Then I fancied it

might be some celebration because plenty had returned to the city, insomuch that my father had bartered the last of the corn he hoarded. I grew more and more delighted at the sport. But soon there advanced an elderly man, who said gravely, "Thou hast stolen this child ; her vesture alone is worth above a hundred drachmas. Carry her home again to her parents, and do it directly, or Nemesis and the Eumenides will overtake thee." Knowing the estimation in which my father had always been holden by his fellow-citizens, I laughed again, and pinched his ear. He, although naturally choleric, burst forth into no resentment at these reproaches, but said calmly, "I think I know thee by name, O guest ! Surely thou art Xanthus the Samian. Deliver this child from famine."

Again I laughed aloud and heartily ; and thinking it was now my part of the game, I held out both my arms and protruded my whole body towards the stranger. He would not receive me from my father's neck, but he asked me with benignity and solicitude if I was hungry ; at which I laughed again and more than ever ; for it was early in the morning, soon after the first meal, and my father had nourished me most carefully and plentifully in all the days of the famine. But Xanthus, waiting for no answer, took out of a sack, which one of his slaves carried at his side, a cake of wheaten bread and a piece of honeycomb, and gave them to me. I held the honeycomb to my father's mouth, thinking it the most of a dainty. He dashed it to the ground ; but seizing the bread, he began to devour it ferociously. This also I thought was in play ; and I clapped my hands at his distortions. But

Xanthus looked on him like one afraid, and smote the cake from him, crying aloud, "Name the price." My father now placed me in his arms, naming a price much below what the other had offered, saying, "The gods are ever with thee, O Xanthus! therefore to thee do I consign my child." But while Xanthus was counting out the silver, my father seized the cake again, which the slave had taken up and was about to replace in the wallet. His hunger was exasperated by the taste and the delay. Suddenly there arose much tumult. Turning round in the old woman's bosom who had received me from Xanthus, I saw my beloved father struggling on the ground, livid and speechless. The more violent my cries, the more rapidly they hurried me away; and many were soon between us. Little was I suspicious that he had suffered the pangs of famine long before; alas! and he had suffered them for me. Do I weep while I am telling you they ended? I could not have closed his eyes, I was too young; but I might have received his last breath, the only comfort of an orphan's bosom. Do you now think him blamable, O Æsop?

LEIGH HUNT

(1784-1859)

THE FURZE ON WIMBLEDON
COMMON

CAN you conceive any covering fitter for the hills of the sun itself than this magnificent furze, as it now appears here in England, robing our heaths and commons all over the country. It is a golden undulation; a foreground, and from some points of view a middle distance, fit to make the richest painter despair; a veritable Field of Cloth of Gold. Morning (Aurora, the golden goddess), when the dawn is of a fineness to match, must look beauty for beauty on it. Sunset is divine. The gold goes stretching away in the distance towards the dark trees, like the rich evening of a poetic life. No wonder Linnæus, when he came to England and first beheld this glorious shrub in bloom, fell down on his knees, and thanked God that he had lived to see it. I hardly know which is the more picturesque sight, — a fine ruddy-cheeked little peasant-boy, not beyond childhood, coming along with a wheelbarrow full of this golden furze, his face looking like a bud a-top of it; or a bent,

heartly old man carrying off a bunch of it on his back, as if he triumphed over time and youth.

SWEETNESS AND LIGHT

Wax-lights, though we are accustomed to overlook the fact, and rank them with ordinary commonplaces, are true fairy tapers, — a white metamorphosis from the flowers, crowned with the most intangible of all visible mysteries—fire.

Then there is honey, which a Greek poet would have called the sister of wax,—a thing as beautiful to eat as the other is to look upon; and beautiful to look upon too. What two extraordinary substances to be made, by little winged creatures, out of roses and lilies! What a singular and lovely energy in nature to impel those little creatures thus to fetch out the sweet and elegant properties of the coloured fragrances of the gardens, and serve them up to us for food and light! honey to eat and waxen tapers to eat it by! What more graceful repast could be imagined on one of the fairy tables made by Vulcan, which moved of their own accord, and came gliding, when he wanted a luncheon, to the side of Apollo! the honey golden as his lyre, and the wax fair as his shoulders. Depend upon it, he has eaten of it many a time, chatting with Hebe before some Olympian concert; and as he talked in an under-tone, fervid as the bees, the bass-strings of his lyre murmured an accompaniment.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY

(1785-1859)

FLOWERS that are so pathetic in their beauty, frail as the clouds, and in their colouring as gorgeous as the heavens, had through thousands of years been the heritage of children—honoured as the jewellery of God only by *them*—when suddenly the voice of Christianity, countersigning the voice of infancy, raised them to a grandeur transcending the Hebrew throne, although founded by God himself, and pronounced Solomon in all his glory not to be arrayed like one of these. Winds again, hurricanes, the eternal breathings soft or loud of Æolian power, wherefore had they, raving or sleeping, escaped all moral arrest and detention? Simply because vain it were to offer a nest for the reception of some new moral birth whilst no religion is yet moving amongst men that can furnish such a birth. Vain is the image that should illustrate a heavenly sentiment, if the sentiment is yet unborn. Then first when it had become necessary to the purposes of a spiritual religion that the spirit of man, as the fountain of all religion, should in some commensurate reflex image have its grandeur and its mysteriousness emblazoned, suddenly the pomp and mysterious path of winds and tempests, blowing whither they list, and from what fountains no man

knows, are cited from darkness and neglect, to give and to receive reciprocally an impassioned glorification, where the lower mystery enshrines and illustrates the higher. Call for the grandest of all earthly spectacles, what is *that*? It is the sun going to his rest. Call for the grandest of all human sentiments, what is *that*? It is that man should forget his anger before he lies down to sleep. And these two grandeurs, the mighty sentiment and the mighty spectacle, are by Christianity married together.

AN OPIUM DREAM

Then suddenly would come a dream of far different character—a tumultuous dream—commencing with a music such as now I often hear in sleep—music of preparation and of awakening suspense. The undulations of fast-gathering tumults were like the opening of the Coronation Anthem; and, like that, gave the feeling of a multitudinous movement, of infinite cavalcades filing off, and the tread of innumerable armies. The morning was come of a mighty day—a day of crisis and of ultimate hope for human nature, then suffering mysterious eclipse, and labouring in some dread extremity. Somewhere, but I knew not where—somehow, but I knew not how—by some beings, but I knew not by whom—a battle, a strife, an agony, was travelling through all its stages—was evolving itself, like the catastrophe of some mighty drama, with which my sympathy was the more insupportable from deepening confusion as to its local scene, its cause, its nature, and its undecipherable issue. I (as is usual in dreams

where, of necessity, we make ourselves central to every movement) had the power, and yet had not the power, to decide it. I had the power, if I could raise myself to will it; and yet again had not the power, for the weight of twenty Atlantics was upon me, or the oppression of inexpiable guilt. "Deeper than ever plummet sounded" I lay inactive. Then like a chorus the passion deepened. Some greater interest was at stake, some mightier cause than ever yet the sword had pleaded or trumpet had proclaimed. Then came sudden alarms; hurrying, to and fro; trepidations of innumerable fugitives, I knew not whether from the good cause or the bad; darkness and lights; tempests and human faces; and at last, with the sense that all was lost, female forms and the features that were worth all the world to me; and but a moment allowed—and clasped hands, with heart-breaking partings, and then—everlasting farewells! and with a sigh such as the caves of hell sighed when Sin uttered the abhorred name of Death, the sound was reverberated—everlasting farewells! and again and yet again reverberated—everlasting farewells! And I awoke in struggles and cried aloud, "I will sleep no more!"

THE BURIED CITY

God smote Savannah-la-mar, and in one night, by earthquake, removed her with all her towers standing and population sleeping, from the steadfast foundations of the shore to the coral floors of ocean. And God said, "Pompeii did I bury and conceal from men through seventeen centuries; this city

I will bury, but not conceal. She shall be a monument to men of my mysterious anger, set in azure light through generations to come ; for I will enshrine her in a crystal dome of my tropic seas." This city therefore, like a mighty galleon with all her apparel mounted, streamers flying, and tackling perfect, seems floating along the noiseless depths of ocean ; and oftentimes in glassy calms, through the translucid atmosphere of water that now stretches like an air-woven awning above the silent encampment, mariners from every clime look down into her courts and terraces, count her gates, and number the spires of her churches. She is one ample cemetery, and has been for many a year ; but, in the mighty calms that brood for weeks over tropic latitudes, she fascinates the eye with a *Fata-Morgana* revelation, as of human life still subsisting in submarine asylums sacred from the storms that torment our upper air.

OUR LADIES OF SORROW

The eldest of the three is named *Mater Lachrymarum*, Our Lady of Tears. She it is that night and day raves and moans, calling for vanished faces. She stood in Rama, where a voice was heard of lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted. She it was that stood in Bethlehem on the night when Herod's sword swept its nurseries of Innocents, and the little feet were stiffened for ever which, heard at times as they trotted along floors overhead, woke pulses of love in household hearts that were not unmarked in heaven. Her eyes are sweet and subtle, wild and

sleepy, by turns; oftentimes rising to the clouds, oftentimes challenging the heavens. She wears a diadem round her head. And I knew by childish memories that she could go abroad upon the winds, when she heard the sobbing of litanies, or the thundering of organs, and when she beheld the mustering of summer clouds. This Sister, the elder, it is that carries keys more than papal at her girdle, which open every cottage and every palace. She, to my knowledge, sat all last summer by the bedside of the blind beggar, him that so often and so gladly I talked with, whose pious daughter, eight years old, with the sunny countenance, resisted the temptations of play and village mirth to travel all day long on dusty roads with her afflicted father. For this did God send her a great reward. In the spring time of the year, and whilst yet her own spring was budding, He recalled her to Himself. But her blind father mourns for ever over her; still he dreams at midnight that the little guiding hand is locked within his own; and still he wakens to a darkness that is now within a second and deeper darkness. This *Mater Lachrymarum* also has been sitting all this winter of 1844-5 within the bed-chamber of the Czar, bringing before his eyes a daughter (not less pious) that vanished to God not less suddenly, and left behind her a darkness not less profound. By the power of the keys it is that Our Lady of Tears glides, a ghostly intruder, into the chambers of sleepless men, sleepless women, sleepless children, from Ganges to the Nile, from Nile to Mississippi. And her, because she is the first-born of her house and has the widest empire, let us honour with the title of "Madonna."

The second Sister is called *Mater Suspiriorum*, Our Lady of Sighs. She never scales the clouds, nor walks abroad upon the winds. She wears no diadem. And her eyes, if they were ever seen, would be neither sweet nor subtle; no man could read their story; they would be found filled with perishing dreams, and with wrecks of forgotten delirium. But she raises not her eyes; her head droops for ever, for ever fastens on the dust. She weeps not. She groans not. But she sighs inaudibly at intervals. Her sister Madonna is oftentimes stormy and frantic, raging in the highest against heaven, and demanding back her darlings. But Our Lady of Sighs never clamours, never defies, dreams not of rebellious aspirations. She is humble to abjectness. Hers is the meekness that belongs to the hopeless. Murmur she may, but it is in her sleep. Whisper she may, but it is to herself in the twilight. Mutter she does at times, but it is in solitary places that are desolate as she is desolate; in ruined cities, and when the sun has gone down to his rest. This Sister is the visitor of the Pariah; of the Jew; of the bondsman to the oar in the Mediterranean galleys; of the English criminal in Norfolk Island, blotted out from the books of remembrance in sweet far-off England; of the baffled penitent reverting his eyes for ever upon a solitary grave, which to him seems the altar overthrown of some past and bloody sacrifice, on which altar no oblations can now be availing, whether towards pardon that he might implore, or towards reparation that he might attempt. Every slave that at noonday looks up to the tropical sun with timid reproach, as he points with one hand to the earth, our general mother,

but for *him* a stepmother, as he points with the other hand to the Bible, our general teacher, but against *him* sealed and sequestered; every woman sitting in darkness, without love to shelter her head, or hope to illumine her solitude, because the heaven-born instincts kindling in her nature germs of holy affections, which God implanted in her womanly bosom, having been stifled by social necessities, now burn sullenly to waste, like sepulchral lamps amongst the ancients; every nun defrauded of her unreturning May-time by wicked kinsman, whom God will judge; every captive in every dungeon; all that are betrayed and all that are rejected; outcasts by traditionary law, and children of hereditary disgrace; all these walk with Our Lady of Sighs. She also carries a key, but she needs it little, for her kingdom is chiefly amongst the tents of Shem, and the houseless vagrant of every clime. Yet in the very highest ranks of man she finds chapels of her own; and even in glorious England there are some that, to the world, carry their heads as proudly as the reindeer, who yet secretly have received her mark upon their foreheads.

But the third Sister, who is also the youngest!—Hush! whisper whilst we talk of *her*! Her kingdom is not large, or else no flesh should live; but within that kingdom all power is hers. Her head, turreted like that of Cybele, rises almost beyond the reach of sight. She droops not; and her eyes rising so high *might* be hidden by distance. But being what they are, they cannot be hidden; through the treble veil of crape which she wears, the fierce light of a blazing misery that rests not for matins or for vespers, for noon of day or noon

of night, for ebbing or for flowing tide, may be read from the very ground. She is the defier of God. She also is the mother of lunacies, and the suggestress of suicides. Deep lie the roots of her power, but narrow is the nation that she rules. For she can approach only those in whom a profound nature has been upheaved by central convulsions; in whom the heart trembles and the brain rocks under conspiracies of tempest from without and tempest from within. Madonna moves with uncertain steps, fast or slow, but still with tragic grace. Our Lady of Sighs creeps timidly and stealthily. But this youngest Sister moves with incalculable motions, bounding, and with tiger's leaps. She carries no key; for though coming rarely amongst men, she storms at all doors at which she is permitted to enter at all. And her name is *Mater Tenebrarum*, our Lady of Darkness.

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

(1785-1866)

THE CIVIC POET

THE poetry which was addressed to the people of the dark ages pleased in proportion to the truth with which it depicted familiar images, and to their natural connexion with the time and place to which they were assigned. In the poetry of our enlightened times, the characteristics of all seasons, soils, and climates may be blended together, with much benefit to the author's fame as an original genius. The cowslip of a civic poet is always in blossom, his fern is always in full feather; he gathers the celandine, the primrose, the heath-flower, the jasmine, and the chrysanthemum, all on the same day, and from the same spot; his nightingale sings all the year round, his moon is always full, his cygnet is as white as his swan, his cedar is as tremulous as his aspen, and his poplar as embowering as his beech. Thus all nature marches with the march of mind; but, among barbarians, instead of mead and wine, and the best seat by the fire, the reward of such a genius would have been to be summarily turned out of doors in the

snow, to meditate on the difference between day and night, and between December and July. It is an age of liberality, indeed, when not to know an oak from a burdock is no disqualification for sylvan minstrelsy.

SIR WILLIAM NAPIER

(1785-1860)

THE CHARGE AT ALBUERA

SUCH a gallant line, issuing from the midst of the smoke, and rapidly separating itself from the confused and broken multitude, startled the enemy's masses then augmenting and pressing onwards as to an assured victory; they wavered, hesitated, and vomiting forth a storm of fire, hastily endeavoured to enlarge their front, while a fearful discharge of grape from all their artillery whistled through the British ranks. Myers was killed, Cole, the three colonels, Ellis, Blakeney, and Hawkshawe fell wounded, and the fusileer battalions, struck by the iron tempest, reeled and staggered like sinking ships: but suddenly and sternly recovering, they closed on their terrible enemies, and then was seen with what a strength and majesty the British soldier fights. In vain did Soult with voice and gesture animate his Frenchmen; in vain did the hardiest veterans, breaking from the crowded columns, sacrifice their lives to gain time for the mass to open out on such a fair field; in vain did the mass itself bear up, and fiercely striving fire indiscriminately upon

friends and foes, while the horsemen hovering on the flank threatened to charge the advancing line. Nothing could stop that astonishing infantry. No sudden burst of undisciplined valour, no nervous enthusiasm weakened the stability of their order, their flashing eyes were bent on the dark columns in their front, their measured tread shook the ground, their dreadful volleys swept away the head of every formation, their deafening shouts overpowered the dissonant cries that broke from all parts of the tumultuous crowd, as slowly and with a horrid carnage it was pushed by the incessant vigour of the attack to the farthest edge of the height. There the French reserve, mixing with the struggling multitude, endeavoured to restore the fight, but only augmented the irremediable disorder, and the mighty mass, giving way like a loosened cliff, went headlong down the steep; the rain flowed after in streams discoloured with blood, and eighteen hundred unwounded men, the remnant of six thousand unconquerable British soldiers, stood triumphant on the fatal hill.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

(1792-1822)

DANTE

DANTE and Milton were both deeply penetrated with the ancient religion of the civilised world; and its spirit exists in their poetry probably in the same proportion as its forms survived in the unreformed worship of modern Europe. The one preceded and the other followed the Reformation at almost equal intervals. Dante was the first religious reformer, and Luther surpassed him rather in the rudeness and acrimony than in the boldness of his censures of papal usurpation. Dante was the first awakener of entranced Europe; he created a language, in itself music and persuasion, out of a chaos of inharmonious barbarisms. He was the congregator of those great spirits who presided over the resurrection of learning; the Lucifer of that starry flock which in the thirteenth century shone forth from republican Italy, as from a heaven into the darkness of the benighted world. His very words are instinct with spirit; each is as a spark, a burning atom of inextinguishable thought; and many yet lie covered in the ashes of their birth, and pregnant with the lightning which has yet

found no conductor. All high poetry is infinite; it is as the first acorn, which contained all oaks potentially. Veil after veil may be undrawn, and the inmost naked beauty of the meaning never exposed. A great poem is a fountain for ever overflowing with the waters of wisdom and delight; and after one person and one age has exhausted all its divine effluence which their peculiar relations enable them to share, another and yet another succeeds, and new relations are ever developed, the source of an unforeseen and an unconceived delight.

OF POETRY

Poetry is indeed something divine. It is at once the centre and circumference of knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science and that to which all science must be referred.¹ It is at the same time the root and blossom of all other systems of thought; it is that from which all spring, and that which adorns all; and that which, if blighted, denies the fruit and the seed, and withholds from the barren world the nourishment and the succession of the scions of the tree of life. It is the perfect and consummate surface and bloom of all things; it is as the odour and the colour of the rose to the texture of the elements that compose it, as the form and splendour of unfaded beauty to the secrets of anatomy and corruption. What were virtue, love, patriotism, friendship — what were the scenery of this beautiful universe which we inhabit—what were our consolations on this side of the grave—and what were our aspirations

¹ Cf. Wordsworth, p. 219.

beyond it, if poetry did not ascend to bring light and fire from those eternal regions where the owl-winged faculty of calculation dare not ever soar? Poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say, "I will compose poetry." The greatest poet even cannot say it; for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence like an inconstant wind awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the colour of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our natures are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure. Could this influence be durable in its original purity and force, it is impossible to predict the greatness of the results; but when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet.

Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds. We are aware of evanescent visitations of thought and feeling sometimes associated with place or person, sometimes regarding our own mind alone, and always arising unforeseen and departing unbidden, but elevating and delightful beyond all expression; so that even in the desire and the regret they leave there cannot but be pleasure, participating as it does in the nature of its object. It is as it were the interpenetration of a diviner nature through our own; but its footsteps are like those of a wind over the sea, which the coming calm erases, and whose traces remain only as on the wrinkled sands

which pave it. These and corresponding conditions of being are experienced principally by those of the most delicate sensibility and the most enlarged imagination; and the state of mind produced by them is at war with every base desire. The enthusiasm of virtue, love, patriotism, and friendship is essentially linked with such emotions; and whilst they last, self appears as what it is, an atom to a universe. Poets are not only subject to these experiences as spirits of the most refined organisation, but they can colour all that they combine with the evanescent hues of this ethereal world; a word, a trait in the representation of a scene or a passion, will touch the enchanted chord, and reanimate, in those who have ever experienced these emotions, the sleeping, the cold, the buried image of the past. Poetry thus makes immortal all that is best and most beautiful in the world; it arrests the vanishing apparitions which haunt the interlunations of life, and veiling them, or in language or in form, sends them forth among mankind, bearing sweet news of kindred joy to those with whom their sisters abide—abide, because there is no portal of expression from the caverns of the spirit which they inhabit into the universe of things. Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man.

Poetry turns all things to loveliness; it exalts the beauty of that which is most beautiful, and it adds beauty to that which is most deformed; it marries exultation and horror, grief and pleasure, eternity and change; it subdues to union under its light yoke all irreconcilable things. It transmutes all that it touches, and every form moving within the radiance of its presence is changed by wondrous

sympathy to an incarnation of the spirit which it breathes ; its secret alchemy turns to potable gold the poisonous waters which flow from death through life ; it strips the veil of familiarity from the world, and lays bare the naked and sleeping beauty, which is the spirit of its forms.

THE ENGLISH CEMETERY IN ROME

Rome is a city, as it were, of the dead, or rather of those who cannot die, and who survive the puny generations which inhabit and pass over the spot which they have made sacred to eternity. In Rome, at least in the first enthusiasm of your recognition of ancient time, you see nothing of the Italians. The nature of the city assists the delusion, for its vast and antique walls describe a circumference of sixteen miles, and thus the population is thinly scattered over this space, nearly as great as London. Wide wild fields are enclosed within it, and there are grassy lanes and copses winding among the ruins, and a great green hill, lonely and bare, which overhangs the Tiber. The gardens of the modern palaces are like wild woods of cedar, and cypress, and pine, and the neglected walks are overgrown with weeds. The English burying-place is a green slope near the walls, under the pyramidal tomb of Cestius, and is, I think, the most beautiful and solemn cemetery I ever beheld. To see the sun shining on its bright grass, fresh, when we first visited it, with the autumnal dews, and hear the whispering of the wind among the leaves of the trees which have

overgrown the tomb of Cestius, and the soil which is stirring in the sun-warm earth, and to mark the tombs, mostly of women and young people, who were buried there, one might, if one were to die, desire the sleep they seem to sleep.

A CATARACT

Imagine a river sixty feet in breadth, with a vast volume of waters, the outlet of a great lake among the higher mountains, falling 300 feet into a sightless gulf of snow-white vapour, which bursts up for ever and for ever, from a circle of black crags, and thence leaping downwards, makes five or six other cataracts, each fifty or a hundred feet high, which exhibit on a smaller scale, and with beautiful and sublime variety, the same appearances. But words (and far less could painting) will not express it. Stand upon the brink of the platform of cliff, which is directly opposite. You see the ever-moving water stream down. It comes in thick and tawny folds, flaking off like solid snow gliding down a mountain. It does not seem hollow within, but without it is unequal, like the folding of linen thrown carelessly down; your eye follows it, and it is lost below; not in the black rocks which gird it around, but in its own foam and spray, in the cloud-like vapours boiling up from below, which is not like rain, nor mist, nor spray, nor foam, but water, in a shape wholly unlike anything I ever saw before. It is as white as snow, but thick and impenetrable to the eye. The very imagination is bewildered in it. A thunder comes up from the

abyss wonderful to hear ; for, though it ever sounds, it is never the same, but, modulated by the changing motion, rises and falls intermittingly ; we passed half an hour in one spot looking at it, and thought but a few minutes had gone by.

THOMAS CARLYLE

(1795-1881)

TWO MEN

Two men I honour, and no third. First the toil-worn Craftsman that with earth-made Implement laboriously conquers the Earth and makes her man's. Venerable to me is the hard Hand; crooked, coarse; wherein notwithstanding lies a cunning virtue, indefeasibly royal, as of the Sceptre of this Planet. Venerable too is the rugged face, all weather-tanned, besoiled, with its rude intelligence; for it is the face of a Man living man-like. Oh, but the more venerable for thy rudeness, and even because we must pity as well as love thee! Hardly-entreated Brother! For us was thy back so bent, for us were thy straight limbs and fingers so deformed; thou wert our Conscript, on whom the lot fell, and fighting our battles wert so marred. For in thee too lay a god-created Form, but it was not to be unfolded; encrusted must it stand with the thick adhesions and defacements of Labour; and thy body, like thy soul, was not to know freedom. Yet toil on, toil on; *thou* art in thy duty, be out of it who may; thou toilest for the altogether indispensable, for daily bread.

A second man I honour, and still more highly ; him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable ; not daily bread, but the bread of Life. Is not he too in his duty ; endeavouring towards inward Harmony ; revealing this, by act or by word, through all his outward endeavours, be they high or low ? Highest of all, when his outward and his inward endeavour are one ; when we can name him Artist ; not earthly Craftsman only, but inspired Thinker, who with heaven-made Implement conquers Heaven for us ! If the poor and humble toil that we have Food, must not the high and glorious toil for him in return, that he have Light, have Guidance, Freedom, Immortality ? These two, in all their degrees, I honour ; all else is chaff and dust, which let the wind blow whither it listeth.

Unspeakably touching is it, however, when I find both dignities united ; and he that must toil outwardly for the lowest of man's wants, is also toiling inwardly for the highest. Sublimer in this world know I nothing than a Peasant Saint, could such now anywhere be met with. Such a one will take thee back to Nazareth itself ; thou wilt see the splendour of Heaven spring forth from the humblest depths of Earth, like a light shining in great darkness.

OF VALOUR

'The main practical belief a man could have was probably not much more than this : of the *Valkyrs* and the *Hall of Odin* ; of an inflexible *Destiny* ; and that the one thing needful for a man was *to be brave*. The *Valkyrs* are Choosers of the Slain ;

a Destiny inexorable, which it is useless trying to bend or soften, has appointed who is to be slain ; this was a fundamental point for the Norse believer ; —as indeed it is for all earnest men everywhere, for a Mahomet, a Luther, for a Napoleon too. It lies at the basis this for every such man ; it is the woof out of which his whole system of thought is woven. The *Valkyrs* ; and then that these *Choosers* lead the brave to a heavenly *Hall of Odin* ; only the base and slavish being thrust elsewhither, into the realms of Hela the Death-goddess ; I take this to have been the soul of the whole Norse Belief. They understood in their heart that it was indispensable to be brave ; that Odin would have no favour for them, but despise and thrust them out, if they were not brave. Consider too whether there is not something in this ! It is an everlasting duty, valid in our day as in that, the duty of being brave. *Valour* is still *value*. The first duty for a man is still that of subduing *Fear*. We must get rid of *Fear* ; we cannot act at all till then. A man's acts are slavish, not true but specious ; his very thoughts are false, he thinks too as a slave and coward, till he have got *Fear* under his feet. Odin's creed, if we disentangle the real kernel of it, is true to this hour. A man shall and must be valiant ; he must march forward, and quit himself like a man,—trusting imperturbably in the appointment and *choice* of the upper Powers ; and, on the whole, not fear at all. Now and always, the completeness of his victory over *Fear* will determine how much of a man he is.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF SORROW

Fore-shadows, call them rather fore-splendours, of that Truth, and Beginning of Truths, fell mysteriously over my soul. Sweeter than Day-spring to the Shipwrecked in Nova Zembla ; ah ! like the mother's voice to her little child that strays bewildered, weeping, in unknown tumults ; like soft streamings of celestial music to my too exasperated heart, came that Evangel. The Universe is not dead and demoniacal, a charnel house with spectres ; but godlike, and my Father's !

With other eyes, too, could I now look upon my fellow man ; with an infinite Love, an infinite Pity. Poor, wandering, wayward man ! Art thou not tried, and beaten with stripes, even as I am ? Ever, whether thou bear the royal mantle or the beggar's gabardine, art thou not so weary, so heavy-laden ; and thy Bed of Rest is but a Grave. O my Brother, my Brother, why cannot I shelter thee in my bosom, and wipe away all tears from thy eyes !—Truly the din of many-voiced Life, which in this solitude, with the mind's organ, I could hear, was no longer a maddening discord, but a melting one ; like inarticulate cries, and sobbings of a dumb creature, which in the ear of Heaven are prayers. The poor Earth, with her poor joys, was now my needy Mother, not my cruel Stepdame ; Man, with his so mad Wants and so mean Endeavours, had become the dearer to me ; and even for his sufferings and his sins, I now first named him Brother. Thus was I standing in the porch of that "*Sanctuary of Sorrow*" ; by strange steep ways had I too been guided thither ; and ere long its sacred gates would open and the "*Divine Depth of Sorrow*" lie disclosed to me.

THOMAS BABINGTON
MACAULAY

(1800-1859)

THE PURITAN

THE Puritan was made up of two different men, the one all self-abasement, penitence, gratitude, passion; the other proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious. He prostrated himself in the dust before his Maker; but he set his foot on the neck of his king. In his devotional retirement he prayed with convulsions, and groans, and tears. He was half-maddened by glorious or terrible illusions. He heard the lyres of angels or the tempting whispers of fiends. He caught a gleam of the Beatific Vision, or woke screaming from dreams of everlasting fire. But when he took his seat in the council, or girt on his sword for war, these tempestuous workings of the soul had left no perceptible trace behind them. People who saw nothing of the godly but their uncouth visages, and heard nothing from them but their groans and their whining hymns, might laugh at them. But those had little reason to laugh who encountered them in the hall of debate or in the field of battle. These fanatics brought to civil and military affairs

a coolness of judgment and an immutability of purpose which some writers have thought inconsistent with their religious zeal, but which were in fact the necessary effects of it. The intensity of their feelings on one subject made them tranquil on every other. One overpowering sentiment had subjected to itself pity and hatred, ambition and fear. Death had lost its terrors and pleasure its charms. They had their smiles and their tears, their raptures and their sorrows, but not for the things of this world. Enthusiasm had made them Stoics, had cleared their minds from every vulgar passion and prejudice, and raised them above the influence of danger and of corruption. It sometimes might lead them to pursue unwise ends, but never to choose unwise means. They went through the world, like Sir Artegal's iron man Talus with his flail, crushing and trampling down oppressors, mingling with human beings, but having neither part nor lot in human infirmities, insensible to fatigue, to pleasure, and to pain, not to be pierced by any weapon, not to be withstood by any barrier.

THE DEMEANOUR OF SAMUEL JOHNSON

The roughness and violence which he showed in society were to be expected from a man whose temper, not naturally gentle, had been long tried by bitterest calamities, by the want of meat, of fire, and of clothes, by the importunity of creditors, by the insolence of booksellers, by the derision of fools,

by the insincerity of patrons, by that bread which is the bitterest of all food, by those stairs which are the most toilsome of all paths, by that deferred hope which makes the heart sick. Through all these things the ill-dressed, coarse, ungainly pedant had struggled manfully up to eminence and command. It was natural that, though his heart was undoubtedly generous and humane, his demeanour in society should be harsh and despotic. For severe distress he had sympathy, and not only sympathy, but munificent relief. But for the suffering which a harsh word inflicts upon a delicate mind he had no pity; for it was a kind of suffering which he could scarcely conceive. He would carry home on his shoulders a sick and starving girl from the streets. He turned his house into a place of refuge for a crowd of wretched old creatures who could find no other asylum; nor could all their peevishness and ingratitude weary out his benevolence. But the pangs of wounded vanity seemed to him ridiculous, and he scarcely felt sufficient compassion even for the pangs of wounded affection. He had seen and felt so much of sharp misery, that he was not affected by paltry vexations; and he seemed to think that everybody ought to be as much hardened to those vexations as himself. He was angry with Boswell for complaining of a headache, with Mrs. Thrale for grumbling about the dust on the road, or the smell of the kitchen. These were, in his phrase, "foppish lamentations," which people ought to be ashamed to utter in a world so full of sin and sorrow. Goldsmith crying because "The Good-natured Man" had failed, inspired him with no pity. Though his own health was not good, he detested and despised valetudinarians. Pecuniary losses,

unless they reduced the loser absolutely to beggary, moved him very little. People whose hearts had been softened by prosperity might weep, he said, for such events, but all that could be expected of a plain man was not to laugh.

WILLIAM OF ORANGE AND THE FRENCH INVASION

Young as he was, his ardent and unconquerable spirit, though disguised by a cold and sullen manner, soon roused the courage of his dismayed countrymen. It was in vain that both his uncle and the French King attempted by splendid offers to seduce him from the cause of the republic. To the States-General he spoke a high and inspiring language. He even ventured to suggest a scheme which has an aspect of antique heroism, and which, if it had been accomplished, would have been the noblest subject for epic song that is to be found in the whole compass of modern history. He told the deputies that, even if their natal soil and the marvels with which human industry had covered it were buried under the ocean, all was not lost. The Hollanders might survive Holland. Liberty and pure religion, driven by tyrants and bigots from Europe, might take refuge in the farthest isles of Asia. The shipping in the ports of the republic would suffice to carry two hundred thousand emigrants to the Indian Archipelago. There the Dutch commonwealth might commence a new and more glorious existence, and might rear, under the Southern Cross, amidst the sugar canes and nutmeg trees, the Exchange of a wealthier Amsterdam,

and the schools of a more learned Leyden. The national spirit swelled and rose high. The terms offered by the Allies were firmly rejected. The dykes were opened. The whole country was one great lake, from which the cities with their ramparts and steeples rose like islands. The invaders were forced to save themselves from destruction by a precipitate retreat.

THE BATTLE OF PLASSEY

Clive was in a painfully anxious situation. He could place no confidence in the sincerity or in the courage of his confederate; and whatever confidence he might place in his own military talents and in the valour and discipline of his troops, it was no light thing to engage an army twenty times as numerous as his own. Before him lay a river over which it was easy to advance, but over which, if things went ill, not one of his little band would ever return. On this occasion, for the first and for the last time, his dauntless spirit, during a few hours, shrank from the fearful responsibility of making a decision. He called a council of war. The majority pronounced against fighting; and Clive declared his concurrence with the majority. Long afterwards, he said that he had never called but one council of war, and that if he had taken the advice of that council, the British would never have been masters of Bengal. But scarcely had the meeting broken up when he was himself again. He retired alone under the shade of some trees, and passed near an hour there in thought. He came back determined to put

every thing to the hazard, and gave orders that all should be in readiness for passing the river on the morrow.

The river was passed; and at the close of a toilsome day's march, the army, long after sunset, took up its quarters in a grove of mango-trees near Plassey, within a mile of the enemy. Clive was unable to sleep; he heard, through the whole night, the sound of drums and cymbals from the vast camp of the Nabob. It is not strange that even his stout heart should now and then have sunk, when he reflected against what odds, and for what a prize, he was in a few hours to contend.

Nor was the rest of Surajah Dowlah more peaceful. His mind, at once weak and stormy, was distracted by wild and horrible apprehensions. Appalled by the greatness and nearness of the crisis, distrusting his captains, dreading every one who approached him, dreading to be left alone, he sat gloomily in his tent, haunted, a Greek poet would have said, by the furies of those who had cursed him with their last breath in the Black Hole.

The day broke, the day which was to decide the fate of India. At sunrise the army of the Nabob, pouring through many openings from the camp, began to move towards the grove where the English lay. Forty thousand infantry, armed with firelocks, pikes, swords, bows and arrows, covered the plain. They were accompanied by fifty pieces of ordnance of the largest size, each tugged by a long team of white oxen, and each pushed on from behind by an elephant. Some smaller guns, under the direction of a few French auxiliaries, were perhaps more formidable. The

cavalry were fifteen thousand, drawn, not from the effeminate population of Bengal, but from the bolder race which inhabits the northern provinces; and the practised eye of Clive could perceive that both the men and the horses were more powerful than those of the Carnatic. The force which he had to oppose to this great multitude consisted of only three thousand men. But of these nearly a thousand were English; and all were led by English officers and trained in the English discipline. Conspicuous in the ranks of the little army were the men of the Thirty-Ninth Regiment, which still bears on its colours, amidst many honourable additions won under Wellington in Spain and Gascony, the name of Plassey, and the proud motto, *Primus in Indis*.

The battle commenced with a cannonade, in which the artillery of the Nabob did scarcely any execution, while the few field-pieces of the English produced great effect. Several of the most distinguished officers in Surajah Dowlah's service fell. Disorder began to spread through his ranks. His own terror increased every moment. One of the conspirators urged on him the expediency of retreating. The insidious advice, agreeing as it did with what his own terrors suggested, was readily received. He ordered his army to fall back, and this order decided his fate. Clive snatched the moment, and ordered his troops to advance. The confused and dispirited multitude gave way before the onset of disciplined valour. No mob attacked by regular soldiers was ever more completely routed. The little band of Frenchmen, who alone ventured to confront the English, were swept down the stream of fugitives.

In an hour the forces of Surajah Dowlah were dispersed, never to reassemble. Only five hundred of the vanquished were slain. But their camp, their guns, their baggage, innumerable waggons, innumerable cattle, remained in the power of the conquerors. With the loss of twenty-two soldiers killed and fifty wounded, Clive had scattered an army of nearly sixty thousand men, and subdued an empire larger and more populous than Great Britain.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

(1801-1890)

THE IMMORTAL CLASSICS

LET us consider too, how differently young and old are affected by the words of some classic author, such as Homer or Horace. Passages which to a boy are but rhetorical commonplaces, neither better nor worse than a hundred others which any clever writer might supply; which he gets by heart and thinks very fine, and imitates, as he thinks, successfully, in his own flowing versification, at length come home to him, when long years have passed, and he has had experience of life, and pierce him, as if he had never before known them, with their sad earnestness and vivid exactness. Then he comes to understand how it is that lines, the birth of some chance morning or evening at an Ionian festival, or among the Sabine hills, have lasted generation after generation, for thousands of years with a power over the mind, and a charm which the current literature of his own day, with all its obvious advantages, is utterly unable to rival. Perhaps this is the reason of the mediæval opinion about Virgil, as of a prophet or a magician; his single words and phrases, his pathetic half lines, giving utterance, as

the voice of Nature herself, to that pain and weariness, yet hope of better things, which is the experience of her children in every time.

THE SITE OF A UNIVERSITY

A confined triangle, perhaps fifty miles its greatest length and thirty its greatest breadth; two elevated rocky barriers, meeting at an angle; three prominent mountains, commanding the plain, —Parnes, Pentelicus, and Hymettus; an unsatisfactory soil; some streams, not always full; such is about the report which the agent of a London company would have made of Attica. He would report that the climate was mild; the hills were limestone; there was plenty of good marble; more pasture land than at first survey might have been expected, sufficient certainly for sheep and goats; fisheries productive; silver mines once, but long since worked out; figs fair; oil first-rate; olives in profusion. But what he would not think of noting down, was, that that olive-tree was so choice in nature and so noble in shape that it excited a religious veneration; and that it took so kindly to the light soil, as to expand into woods upon the open plain, and to climb up and fringe the hills. He would not think of writing word to his employers how that clear air, of which I have spoken, brought out, yet blended and subdued, the colours on the marble, till they had a softness and harmony, for all their richness, which in a picture looks exaggerated, yet is after all within the truth. He would not tell how that same delicate and brilliant atmosphere freshened up the pale olive, till the

olive forgot its monotony, and its cheek glowed like the arbutus or beech of the Umbrian hills. He would say nothing of the thyme and thousand fragrant herbs which carpeted Hymettus; he would hear nothing of the hum of its bees; nor take much account of the rare flavour of its honey, since Gozo and Minorca were sufficient for the English demand. He would look over the Ægean from the height he had ascended; he would follow with his eye the chain of islands, which starting from the Sunian headland seemed to offer the fabled divinities of Attica, when they would visit their Ionian cousins, a sort of viaduct thereto across the sea; but that fancy would not occur to him, nor any admiration of the dark violet billows with their white edges down below; nor of those graceful fan-like jets of silver upon the rocks, which slowly rise aloft like water spirits from the deep, then shiver, and break, and spread, and shroud themselves, and disappear, in a soft mist of foam; nor of the gentle incessant heaving and panting of the whole liquid plain; nor of the long waves, keeping steady time, like a line of soldiery, as they resound upon the hollow shore,—he would not deign to notice that restless living element at all, except to bless his stars that he was not upon it. Nor the distinct detail, nor the refined colouring, nor the graceful outline and roseate golden hue of the jutting crags, nor the bold shadows cast from Otus or Laurium by the declining sun;—our agent of a mercantile firm would not value these matters even at a low figure. Rather we must turn for the sympathy we seek to yon pilgrim student, come from a semi-barbarous land to that small corner of the earth, as to a shrine, where he might take his

fill of gazing on those emblems and coruscations of invisible unoriginate perfection. It was the stranger from a remote province, from Britain or from Mauritania, who in a scene so different from that of his chilly woody swamps, or of his fiery choking sands, learned at once what a real University must be, by coming to understand the sort of country which was its suitable home.

THE SORROWFUL WORLD

Starting then with the being of a God (which, as I have said, is as certain to me as the certainty of my own existence, though when I try to put the grounds of that certainty into logical shape I find a difficulty in doing so in mood and figure to my satisfaction,) I look out of myself into the world of men, and there I see a sight which fills me with unspeakable distress. The world seems simply to give the lie to that great truth, of which my whole being is so full; and the effect upon me is, in consequence, as a matter of necessity, as confusing as if it denied that I am in existence myself. If I looked into a mirror and did not see my face, I should have the sort of feeling which actually comes upon me when I look into this living busy world and see no reflexion of its Creator. This is, to me, one of those great difficulties of this absolute primary truth, to which I referred just now. Were it not for this voice, speaking so clearly in my conscience and my heart, I should be an atheist, or a pantheist, or a polytheist when I looked into the world. I am speaking for myself only; and I am far from denying the real force of

the arguments in proof of a God, drawn from the general facts of human society and the course of history; but these do not warm me or enlighten me; they do not take away the winter of my desolation, or make the buds unfold and the leaves grow within me and my moral being rejoice. The sight of the world is nothing else than the prophet's scroll, full of "lamentations, and mourning, and woe."

GEORGE BORROW

(1803-1881)

THE POWER OF DARKNESS

AFTER taking such refreshment as the place afforded, we pursued our way till we were within a quarter of a league of the huts which stand on the edge of the savage wilderness we had before crossed. Here we were overtaken by a horseman; he was a powerful, middlesized man, and was mounted on a noble Spanish horse; at his saddle was slung a formidable gun. He inquired if I intended to pass the night at Vendas Novas, and on my replying in the affirmative, he said that he would avail himself of our company. He now looked towards the sun, whose disk was rapidly sinking beneath the horizon, and entreated us to spur on and make the most of its light, for that the moor was a horrible place in the dusk. He placed himself at our head, and we trotted briskly on, the boy, or muleteer, who attended us running behind without exhibiting the slightest symptom of fatigue.

We entered upon the moor, and had advanced about a mile when dark night fell around us. We were in a wild path, with high brushwood on either

side, when the rider said that he could not confront the darkness, and begged me to ride on before, and he would follow after ; I could hear him trembling. I asked the reason of his terror, and he replied that at one time darkness was the same thing to him as day, but that of late years he dreaded it, especially in wild places. I complied with his request, but I was ignorant of the way, and, as I could scarcely see my hand, was continually going wrong. This made the man impatient, and he again placed himself at our head. We proceeded so for a considerable way, when he again stopped, and said that the power of the darkness was too much for him. His horse seemed to be infected with the same panic, for it shook in every limb. I now told him to call on the name of the Lord, who was able to turn the darkness into light ; but he gave a terrible shout, and, brandishing his gun aloft, discharged it in the air. His horse sprang forward at full speed, and my mule, which was one of the swiftest of its kind, took fright and followed at the heels of the charger. On we flew like a whirlwind, the hoofs of the animals illuming the path with the sparks of fire they struck from the stones. I knew not whither we were going, but the dumb creatures were acquainted with the way, and soon brought us to Vendas Novas, where we were rejoined by our companions.

I thought this man was a coward, but I did him injustice, for during the day he was as brave as a lion and feared no one. About five years since he had overcome two robbers who had attacked him on the moors, and after tying their hands behind them, had delivered them up to justice ; but at night the rustling of a leaf filled him with terror.

I have known similar instances of the kind in persons of otherwise extraordinary resolution. For myself, I confess I am not a person of extraordinary resolution, but the dangers of the night daunt me no more than those of midday.

HARRIET MARTINEAU

(1802-1876)

SAMUEL ROGERS

“ROGERS amusing and sarcastic as usual;”—this note of Moore’s may stand as the general description of him by those who hoped, each for himself, to propitiate the cynic. As age advanced upon him, the admixture of the generous and the malignant in him became more singular. A footman robbed him of a large quantity of plate; and of a kind which was inestimable to him. He was incensed, and desired never to hear of the fellow more,—the man having absconded. Not many months afterwards, Rogers was paying the passage to New York of the man’s wife and family—somebody having told him that that family junction might afford a chance of the man’s reformation. Such were his deeds at the very time that his tongue was dropping verjuice, and his wit was sneering behind backs at a whole circle of old friends and hospitable entertainers. Such was the curious human problem offered to the analyst of character, and such is the needful explanation of the mixed character of client and patron which Rogers sustained to the last.

His celebrated literary breakfasts will not be forgotten during the generation of those who enjoyed them. They became at last painful when the aged man's memory failed while his causticity remained. His hold on life was very strong. He who was an authority on the incidents of the Hastings trial, and who was in Fox's room when he was dying—he who saw George III. a young man, and was growing into manhood when Johnson went to the Hebrides, survived for several years being run over by a cab of the construction of the middle of the nineteenth century. His poetry could scarcely be said to live as long as himself, as it was rather the illustrations with which it was graced than the verse itself that kept his volumes on sale and within view. The elegance and correctness of his verse are beyond question; but the higher and more substantial qualities of true poetry will hardly be recognised there. It should be remembered that there is a piece of prose writing of his of which Mackintosh said that "Hume could not improve the thoughts nor Addison the language." That gem is the piece on Assassination¹ in his *Italy*.

If Rogers is to be judged by his writings, let it be by such fragments as that little essay; if further, by his deeds rather than his words. So may the world retain the fairest remembrance of the last English Mæcenæ, and the only man among us, perhaps, who has illustrated in his own person the position at once of patron and of client.

¹ See p. 198.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI, EARL
OF BEACONSFIELD

(1804-1881)

THE GENIUS OF JUDAISM

FAVOURÉD by nature we still remain ; but in exact proportion as we have been favoured by nature we have been persecuted by man. After a thousand struggles—after acts of heroic courage that Rome has never equalled—deeds of divine patriotism that Athens and Sparta and Carthage have never excelled—we have endured fifteen hundred years of supernatural slavery ; during which every device that can degrade or destroy man has been the destiny that we have sustained and baffled. The Hebrew child has entered adolescence only to learn that he was the Pariah of that ungrateful Europe that owes to him the best part of its laws, a fine portion of its literature, all its religion. Great poets require a public ; we have been content with the immortal melodies that we sung more than two thousand years ago by the waters of Babylon and wept. They record our triumphs ; they solace our afflictions. Great orators are the creatures of popular assemblies ; we were permitted only by

stealth to meet even in our temples. But the passionate and creative genius that is the nearest link to divinity, and which no human tyranny can destroy though it can divert it; that should have stirred the hearts of nations by its inspired sympathy, or governed senates by its burning eloquence, has found a medium for its expression, to which, in spite of your prejudices and your evil passions, you have been obliged to bow. The ear, the voice, the fancy teeming with combinations—the imagination fervent with picture and emotion, that came from Caucasus, and which we have preserved unpolluted—have endowed us with almost the exclusive privilege of music; that science of harmonious sounds which the ancients recognised as most divine, and deified in the person of their most beautiful creation.

JOHN STUART MILL

(1806-1873)

THE SALT OF THE EARTH

IT will not be denied by anybody, that originality is a valuable element in human affairs. There is always need of persons not only to discover new truths and point out when what were once truths are true no longer, but also to commence new practices, and set the example of more enlightened conduct and better taste and sense in human life. This cannot well be gainsaid by anybody who does not believe that the world has already attained perfection in all its ways and practices. It is true that this benefit is not capable of being rendered by everybody alike: there are but few persons, in comparison with the whole of mankind, whose experiments, if adopted by others, would be likely to be any improvement on established practice. But these few are the salt of the earth; without them, human life would become a stagnant pool. Not only is it they who introduce good things which did not before exist; it is they who keep the life in those which already exist. If there were nothing new to be done, would human intellect cease to be necessary? Would it be a reason why

those who do the old things should forget why they are done, and do them like cattle, not like human beings? There is only too great a tendency in the best beliefs and practices to degenerate into the mechanical; and unless there were a succession of persons whose ever-recurring originality prevents the grounds of those beliefs and practices from becoming merely traditional, such dead matter would not resist the smallest shock from anything really alive, and there would be no reason why civilisation should not die out, as in the Byzantine Empire.

Persons of genius, it is true, are, and are always likely to be, a small minority; but in order to have them, it is necessary to preserve the soil in which they grow. Genius can only breathe freely in an *atmosphere* of freedom. Persons of genius are more individual than any other people—less capable, consequently, of fitting themselves, without hurtful compression, into any of the small number of moulds which society provides in order to save its members the trouble of forming their own character. If from timidity they consent to be forced into one of these moulds, and to let all that part of themselves which cannot expand under the pressure remain unexpanded, society will be little the better for their genius. If they are of a strong character, and break their fetters, they become a mark for the society which has not succeeded in reducing them to commonplace, to point out with solemn warning as “wild,” “erratic,” and the like; much as if one should complain of the Niagara river for not flowing smoothly between its banks like a Dutch canal.

I insist thus emphatically on the importance of genius and the necessity of allowing it to unfold

itself freely both in thought and practice, being well aware that no one will deny the position in theory, but knowing also that almost every one, in reality, is totally indifferent to it. People think genius a fine thing if it enables a man to write an exciting poem, or paint a picture. But in its true sense, that of originality in thought and action, though no one says that it is not a thing to be admired, nearly all, at heart, think that they can do very well without it. Unhappily this is too natural to be wondered at. Originality is the one thing which unoriginal minds cannot feel the use of. They cannot see what it is to do for them; how should they? If they could see what it would do for them, it would not be originality. The first service which originality has to render them, is that of opening their eyes; which being once fully done, they would have a chance of being themselves original. Meanwhile, recollecting that nothing was ever yet done which some one was not the first to do, and that all good things which exist are the fruits of originality, let them be modest enough to believe that there is something still left for it to accomplish, and assure themselves that they are more in need of originality, the less they are conscious of the want.

ELIZABETH GASKELL

(1810-1865)

SMALL ECONOMIES

I HAVE often noticed that almost every one has his own individual small economies—careful habits of saving fractions of pennies in some one peculiar direction—any disturbance of which annoys him more than spending shillings or pounds on some real extravagance. An old gentleman of my acquaintance, who took the intelligence of the failure of a Joint-Stock Bank, in which some of his money was invested, with stoical mildness, worried his family all through a long summer's day, because one of them had torn (instead of cutting) out the written leaves of his now useless bank-book ; of course the corresponding pages at the other end came out as well, and this little unnecessary waste of paper (his private economy) chafed him more than all the loss of his money. Envelopes fretted his soul terribly when they first came in ; the only way in which he could reconcile himself to such waste of his cherished article was by patiently turning inside out all that were sent to him, and so making them serve again. Even now, though tamed by age, I see him casting wistful

glances at his daughters when they send a whole inside of a half-sheet of note-paper, with the three lines of acceptance to an invitation, written on only one of the sides. I am not above owning that I have this human weakness myself. String is my foible. My pockets get full of little hanks of it, picked up and twisted together, ready for uses that never come. I am seriously annoyed if any one cuts the string of a parcel instead of patiently and faithfully undoing it fold by fold. How people can bring themselves to use indiarubber rings, which are a sort of deification of string, as lightly as they do, I cannot imagine. To me an indiarubber ring is a precious treasure. I have one which is not new—one that I picked up off the floor nearly six years ago. I have really tried to use it, but my heart failed me, and I could not commit the extravagance.

Small pieces of butter grieve others. They cannot attend to conversation because of the annoyance occasioned by the habit which some people have of invariably taking more butter than they want. Have you not seen the anxious look (almost mesmeric) which such persons fix on the article? They would feel it a relief if they might bury it out of sight by popping it into their own mouths and swallowing it down; and they are really made happy if the person on whose plate it lies unused suddenly breaks off a piece of toast (which he does not want at all) and eats up his butter. They think that this is not waste.

Now Miss Matty Jenkyns was chary of candles. We had many devices to use as few as possible. In the winter afternoons she would sit knitting for two or three hours—she could do this in the dark,

or by firelight—and when I asked if I might not ring for candles to finish stitching my wrist-bands, she told me to “keep blind man’s holiday.” They were usually brought in with tea; but we only burnt one at a time. As we lived in constant preparation for a friend who might come in any evening (but who never did), it required some contrivance to keep our two candles of the same length, ready to be lighted, and to look as if we burnt two always. The candles took it in turns; and, whatever we might be talking about or doing, Miss Matty’s eyes were habitually fixed upon the candle, ready to jump up and extinguish it and to light the other before they had become too uneven in length to be restored to equality in the course of the evening.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE
THACKERAY
(1811-1862)
WATERLOO

ALL that day, from morning until past sunset, the cannon never ceased to roar. It was dark when the cannonading stopped all of a sudden.

All of us have read of what occurred during that interval. The tale is in every Englishman's mouth ; and you and I, who were children when the great battle was won and lost, are never tired of hearing and recounting the history of that famous action. Its remembrance rankles still in the bosoms of millions of the countrymen of those brave men who lost the day. They pant for an opportunity of revenging that humiliation ; and if a contest, ending in a victory on their part, should ensue, elating them in their turn, and leaving its cursed legacy of hatred and rage behind to us, there is no end to the so-called glory and shame, and to the alternations of successful and unsuccessful murder, in which two high-spirited nations might engage. Centuries hence, we Frenchmen and Englishmen might be boasting and killing each other still, carrying out bravely the Devil's code of honour.

All our friends took their share and fought like men in the great field. All day long, whilst the women were praying ten miles away, the lines of the dauntless English infantry were receiving and repelling the furious charges of the French horsemen. Guns which were heard at Brussels were ploughing up their ranks, and comrades falling, and the resolute survivors closing in. Towards evening the attack of the French, repeated and resisted so bravely, slackened in its fury. They had other foes besides the British to engage, or were preparing for a final onset. It came at last; the columns of the Imperial Guard marched up the hill of Saint Jean, at length and at once to sweep the English from the height which they had maintained all day, and spite of all, unscared by the thunder of the artillery, which hurled death from the English line—the dark rolling column pressed on and up the hill. It seemed almost to crest the eminence, when it began to wave and falter. Then it stopped, still facing the shot. Then at last the English troops rushed from the post from which no enemy had been able to dislodge them, and the Guard turned and fled.

No more firing was heard at Brussels—the pursuit rolled miles away. Darkness came down on the field and city; and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart.

CHERCHEZ LA FEMME

Men have all sorts of motives which carry them onwards in life, and are driven into acts of desperation, or it may be of distinction, from a hundred different

causes. I have asked about men in my own company (new drafts of poor country boys were perpetually coming over to us during the wars, brought from the ploughshare to the sword), and found that a half of them under the flags were driven thither on account of a woman. What can the sons of Adam and Eve expect, but to continue in that course of love and trouble their father and mother set out on? Oh my grandson! I am drawing nigh to the end of that period of my history when I was acquainted with the great world of England and Europe; my years are past the Hebrew poet's limit, and I say unto thee, all my troubles and joys too, for that matter, have come from a woman; as thine will when thy destined course begins. 'Twas a woman that made a soldier of me, that set me intriguing afterwards; I believe I would have spun smocks for her had she so bidden me; what strength I had in my head I would have given her; hath not every man in his degree had his Omphale and Delilah? Mine befooled me on the banks of the Thames, and in dear old England; thou mayest find thine own by Rappahannoc.

To please that woman, then, I tried to distinguish myself as a soldier, and afterwards as a wit and a politician; as to please another I would have put on a black cassock and a pair of bands, and had done so but that a superior fate intervened to defeat that project. And I say I think the world is like Captain Esmond's company I spoke of anon; and could you see veery man's career in life, you would find a woman dogging him; or clinging round his march and stopping him; or cheering him and goading him; or beckoning him out of her

chariot so that he goes up to her, and leaves the race to be run without him ; or bringing him the apple, and saying "Eat"; or fetching him the daggers and whispering "Kill! yonder lies Duncan and a crown, and an opportunity."

THE POOR BRETHREN

Mention has been made once or twice in the course of this history of the Grey Friars School,—where the Colonel and Clive and I had been brought up,—an ancient foundation of the time of James 1., still subsisting in the heart of London city. The death-day of the founder of the place is still kept solemnly by Cistercians. In their chapel, where assemble the boys of the school, and the fourscore old men of the hospital, the founder's tomb stands, a huge edifice, emblazoned with heraldic decorations and clumsy carved allegories. There is an old Hall, a beautiful specimen of the architecture of James's time,—an old Hall? many old halls; old staircases, old passages, old chambers decorated with old portraits, walking in the midst of which we walk, as it were, in the early seventeenth century. To others than Cistercians Grey Friars is a dreary place possibly. Nevertheless, the pupils educated there love to revisit it; and the oldest of us grow young again for an hour or two as we come back into those scenes of childhood.

The custom of the school is, that on the 12th of December, the Founder's Day, the head gown-boy shall recite a Latin oration, in praise *Fundatoris Nostri*, and upon other subjects; and a goodly company of old Cistercians is generally brought

together to attend this oration : after which we go to chapel and hear a sermon, after which we adjourn to a great dinner, where old condisciples meet, old toasts are given, and speeches are made. Before marching from the oration-hall to chapel, the stewards of the day's dinner, according to old-fashioned rite, have wands put into their hands, walk to church at the head of the procession, and sit there in places of honour. The boys are already in their seats with smug fresh faces, and shining white collars ; the old black-gowned pensioners are on their benches, the chapel is lighted, and Founder's Tomb, with its grotesque carvings, monsters, heraldries, darkles and shines with the most wonderful shadows and lights. There he lies, Fundator Noster, in his ruff and gown, awaiting the great Examination Day. We oldsters, be we ever so old, become boys again as we look at that familiar old tomb, and think how the seats are altered since we were here, and how the doctor—not the present doctor, the doctor of *our* time—used to sit yonder, and his awful eye used to frighten us shuddering boys on whom it lighted ; and how the boy next us *would* kick our shins during service time, and how the monitor would cane us afterwards because our shins were kicked. Yonder sit forty cherry-cheeked boys, thinking about home and holidays tomorrow. Yonder sit some threescore old gentlemen pensioners of the Hospital, listening to the prayers and the psalms. You hear them coughing feebly in the twilight—the old reverend blackgowns. Is Codd Ajax alive ? you wonder—the Cistercian lads called these old gentlemen Codd, I know not wherefore—but is old Codd Ajax alive, I wonder ?

or Codd Soldier? or kind old Codd Gentleman, or has the grave closed over them? A plenty of candles lights up this chapel, and this scene of age and youth, and early memories, and pompous death. How solemn the well-remembered prayers are, here uttered again in the place where in childhood we used to hear them! How beautiful and decorous the rite; how noble the ancient words of the supplications which the priest utters, and to which generations of fresh children and troops of bygone seniors have cried Amen under those arches! The service for Founder's Day is a special one; one of the psalms selected being the thirty-seventh, and we hear—

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.

“I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.”

As we came to this verse, I chanced to look up from my book towards the swarm of black-coated pensioners; and amongst them—amongst them—sat Thomas Newcome.

His dear old head was bent down over his prayer-book; there was no mistaking him. He wore the black gown of the pensioners of the Hospital of Grey Friars. His Order of the Bath was on his breast. He stood there amongst the Poor Brethren, uttering the responses to the psalm. The steps of this good man had been ordered hither by Heaven's decree; to this almshouse! Here it was ordained that a life all love, and kindness, and honour, should end! I heard no

more of prayers, and psalms, and sermon after that. How dared I to be in a place of mark, and he, he yonder among the poor? Oh, pardon, you noble soul! I ask forgiveness of you for being of a world that has so treated you—you my better, you the honest, and gentle, and good! I thought the service would never end, or the organist's voluntaries, or the preacher's homily.

JOHN BRIGHT

(1811-1889)

THE ANGEL OF DEATH

I SHALL not say one word here about the state of the army in the Crimea, or one word about its numbers or its condition. Every Member of this House, every inhabitant of this country, has been sufficiently harrowed with details regarding it. To my solemn belief, thousands—nay, scores of thousands of persons—have retired to rest, night after night, whose slumbers have been disturbed or whose dreams have been based upon the sufferings and agonies of our soldiers in the Crimea. I cannot but notice that an uneasy feeling exists as to the news which may arrive by the very next mail from the East. I do not suppose that your troops are to be beaten in actual conflict with the foe, or that they will be driven into the sea; but I am certain that many homes in England in which there now exists a fond hope that the distant one may return—many such homes may be rendered desolate when the next mail shall arrive. The Angel of Death has been abroad throughout the land; you may almost hear the beating of his wings. There is no one, as when the first-born were slain of old,

to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two sideposts of our doors, that he may spare and pass on; he takes his victims from the castle of the noble, the mansion of the wealthy, and the cottage of the poor and the lowly, and it is on behalf of all these classes that I make this solemn appeal.

CHARLES DICKENS

(1813-1870)

A CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE

THE first objects that assume a distinct presence before me, as I look far back, into the blank of my infancy, are my mother with her pretty hair and youthful shape, and Peggotty, with no shape at all, and eyes so dark that they seemed to darken their whole neighbourhood in her face, and cheeks and arms so hard and red that I wondered the birds didn't peck her in preference to apples.

There comes out of the cloud, our house—not new to me, but quite familiar, in its earliest remembrance. On the ground-floor is Peggotty's kitchen opening into a back yard; with a pigeon-house on a pole, in the centre, without any pigeons in it; a great dog-kennel in a corner, without any dog; and a quantity of fowls that look terribly tall to me, walking about in a menacing and ferocious manner. There is one cock who gets upon a post to crow, and seems to take particular notice of me as I look at him through the kitchen window, who makes me shiver, he is so fierce. Of the geese outside the side-gate who come waddling after me with their long necks stretched out when I go that

way, I dream at night; as a man environed by wild beasts might dream of lions.

Here is a long passage—what an enormous perspective I make of it!—leading from Peggotty's kitchen to the front-door. A dark store-room opens out of it, and that is a place to be run past at night; for I don't know what may be among those tubs and jars and old tea-chests, when there is nobody in there with a dimly burning light letting a mouldy air come out at the door, in which there is the smell of soap, pickles, pepper, candles, and coffee, all at one whiff. Then there are the two parlours; the parlour in which we sit of an evening, my mother and I and Peggotty—for Peggotty is quite our companion, when her work is done and we are alone—and the best parlour where we sit on a Sunday; grandly, but not so comfortably. There is something of a doleful air about that room to me, for Peggotty has told me—I don't know when, but apparently ages ago—about my father's funeral, and the company having their black cloaks put on. One Sunday night my mother reads to Peggotty and me in there, how Lazarus was raised up from the dead. And I am so frightened that they are afterwards obliged to take me out of bed, and show me the quiet churchyard out of the bedroom window, with the dead all lying in their graves at rest, below the solemn moon.

There is nothing half so green that I know anywhere, as the grass of that churchyard; nothing half so shady as its trees; nothing half so quiet as its tombstones. The sheep are feeding there, when I kneel up, early in the morning, in my little bed in a closet within my mother's room, to look out at it; and I see the red light shining on the sun-

dial, and think within myself, "Is the sun-dial glad, I wonder, that it can tell the time again?"

Here is our pew in the church. What a high-backed pew! With a window near it, out of which our house can be seen, and *is* seen many times during the morning's service by Peggotty, who likes to make herself as sure as she can that it is not being robbed, or is not in flames. But though Peggotty's eye wanders, she is much offended if mine does, and frowns to me, as I stand upon the seat, that I am to look at the clergyman. But I can't always look at him—I know him without that white thing on, and I am afraid of his wondering why I stare so, and perhaps stopping the service to inquire—and what am I do? It's a dreadful thing to gape, but I must do something. I look at my mother, but *she* pretends not to see me. I look at a boy in the aisle, and *he* makes faces at me. I look at the sunlight coming in at the open door through the porch, and there I see a stray sheep—I don't mean a sinner, but mutton—half making up his mind to come into the church. I feel that if I looked at him any longer, I might be tempted to say something out loud; and what would become of me then! I look up at the monumental tablets on the wall, and try to think of Mr. Bodgers late of this parish, and what the feelings of Mrs. Bodgers must have been, when affliction sore, long time Mr. Bodgers bore, and physicians were in vain. I wonder whether they called in Mr. Chillip, and he was in vain; and if so, how he likes to be reminded of it once a week. I look from Mr. Chillip, in his Sunday neck-cloth, to the pulpit; and think what a good place it would be to play in, and what a castle it would

make, with another boy coming up the stairs to attack it, and having the velvet cushion with the tassels thrown down on his head. In time my eyes gradually shut up; and from hearing the clergyman singing a drowsy song in the heat, I hear nothing, until I fall off the seat with a crash, and am taken out, more dead than alive, by Peggotty.

MRS. BAGNET'S BIRTHDAY

A great annual occasion has come round in the establishment of Mr. Joseph Bagnet, otherwise *Lignum Vitæ*, ex-artillery-man and present bassoon-player. An occasion of feasting and festival. The celebration of a birthday in the family.

It is not Mr. Bagnet's birthday. Mr. Bagnet merely distinguishes that epoch in the musical instrument business by kissing the children with an extra smack before breakfast, smoking an additional pipe after dinner, and wondering towards evening what his poor old mother is thinking about it,—a subject of infinite speculation, and rendered so by his mother having departed this life twenty years. Some men rarely revert to their father, but seem, in the bank-books of their remembrance, to have transferred all the stock of filial affection into their mother's name. Mr. Bagnet is one of these. Perhaps his exalted appreciation of the merits of the old girl causes him usually to make the noun-substantive Goodness of the feminine gender.

It is not the birthday of one of the three children. Those occasions are kept with some marks of distinction, but they rarely overleap the bounds of

happy returns and a pudding. On young Woolwich's last birthday, Mr. Bagnet certainly did, after observing on his growth and general advancement, proceed, in a moment of profound reflection on the changes wrought by time, to examine him in the catechism; accomplishing with extreme accuracy the questions number one and two, What is your name? and Who gave you that name? but there failing in the exact precision of his memory, and substituting for number three, the question And how do you like that name? which he propounded with a sense of its importance, in itself so edifying and improving as to give it quite an orthodox air. This, however, was a speciality on that particular birthday, and not a general solemnity.

It is the old girl's birthday; and that is the greatest holiday and reddest-letter day in Mr. Bagnet's Calendar. The auspicious event is always commemorated according to certain forms, settled and prescribed by Mr. Bagnet some years since. Mr. Bagnet being deeply convinced that to have a pair of fowls for dinner is to attain the highest pitch of imperial luxury, invariably goes forth himself very early in the morning of this day to buy a pair; he is, as invariably, taken in by the vendor, and installed in the possession of the oldest inhabitants of any coop in Europe. Returning with these triumphs of toughness tied up in a clean blue and white cotton handkerchief (essential to the arrangements), he in a casual manner invites Mrs. Bagnet to declare at breakfast what she would like for dinner. Mrs. Bagnet, by a coincidence never known to fail, replying Fowls, Mr. Bagnet instantly produces his bundle from a place of concealment, amidst general amazement and rejoicing. He

further requires that the old girl shall do nothing all day long, but sit in her very best gown, and be served by himself and the young people. As he is not illustrious for his cookery, this may be supposed to be a matter of state rather than enjoyment on the old girl's part, but she keeps her state with all imaginable cheerfulness.

On this present birthday, Mr. Bagnet has accomplished the usual preliminaries. He has bought two specimens of poultry, which, if there be any truth in adages, were certainly not caught with chaff, to be prepared for the spit; he has amazed and rejoiced the family by their unlooked-for production; he is himself directing the roasting of the poultry; and Mrs. Bagnet, with her wholesome brown fingers itching to prevent what she sees going wrong, sits in her gown of ceremony, an honoured guest.

Quebec and Malta lay the cloth for dinner, while Woolwich serving, as beseems him, under his father, keeps the fowls revolving. To these young scullions Mrs. Bagnet occasionally imparts a wink, or a shake of the head, or a crooked face, as they make mistakes.

"At half-after one." Says Mr. Bagnet. "To the minute. They'll be done."

Mrs. Bagnet with anguish, beholds one of them at a standstill before the fire, and beginning to burn.

"You shall have a dinner, old girl," says Mr. Bagnet, "fit for a queen."

Mrs. Bagnet shows her white teeth cheerfully, but to the perception of her son betrays so much uneasiness of spirit, that he is impelled by the dictates of affection to ask her, with his eyes, what is the matter?—thus standing, with his eyes wide

open, more oblivious of the fowls than before, and not affording the least hope of a return to consciousness. Fortunately his elder sister perceives the cause of the agitation in Mrs. Bagnet's breast, and with an admonitory poke recalls him. The stopped fowls going round again, Mrs. Bagnet closes her eyes, in the intensity of her relief.

Further conversation is prevented for the time, by the necessity under which Mr. Bagnet finds himself of directing the whole force of his mind to the dinner, which is a little endangered by the dry humour of the fowls in not yielding any gravy, and also by the made gravy acquiring no flavour, and turning out of a flaxen complexion. With a similar perverseness, the potatoes crumble off forks in the process of peeling, upheaving from their centres in every direction, as if they were subject to earthquakes. The legs of the fowls too, are longer than could be desired, and extremely scaly. Overcoming these disadvantages to the best of his ability, Mr. Bagnet at last dishes, and they sit down at table; Mrs. Bagnet occupying the guest's place at his right hand.

It is well for the old girl that she has but one birthday in a year, for two such indulgences in poultry might be injurious. Every kind of finer tendon and ligament that is in the nature of poultry to possess is developed in these specimens in the singular form of guitar-strings. Their limbs appear to have struck roots into their breasts and bodies, as aged trees strike roots into the earth. Their legs are so hard as to encourage the idea that they must have devoted the greater part of their long and arduous lives to pedestrian exercises and the walking of matches. But Mr. Bagnet, unconscious

of these little defects, sets his heart on Mrs. Bagnet eating a most severe quantity of the delicacies before her ; and as that good old girl would not cause him a moment's disappointment on any day, least of all on such a day, for any consideration, she imperils her digestion fearfully. How young Woolwich cleans the drumsticks without being of ostrich descent, his anxious mother is at a loss to understand.

The old girl has another trial to undergo after the conclusion of the repast, in sitting in state to see the room cleared, the hearth swept, and the dinner-service washed up and polished in the back yard. The great delight and energy with which the two young ladies apply themselves to these duties, turning up their skirts in imitation of their mother, and skating in and out on little scaffolds of pattens, inspire the highest hopes for the future, but some anxiety for the present. The same causes lead to confusion of tongues, a clattering of crockery, a rattling of tin mugs, a whisking of brooms, and an expenditure of water, all in excess ; while the saturation of the young ladies themselves is almost too moving a spectacle for Mrs. Bagnet to look upon with the calmness proper to her position. At last the various cleansing processes are triumphantly completed ; Quebec and Malta appear in fresh attire, smiling and dry ; pipes, tobacco, and something to drink, are placed upon the table ; and the old girl enjoys the first peace of mind she ever knows on the day of this delightful entertainment.

RICHARD WILLIAM CHURCH

(1815-1890)

THE EARLY OTTOMANS

THE history of the early Ottomans has been most imperfectly told, and much still remains dark and uncertain in the features which distinguish in its origin that strange and mighty race from its kindred tribes. It is a history, in the main, of wasteful and unscrupulous conquest, like that of other successful barbarians of Europe and Asia. But we seem to discern, even from the beginning, some points of special interest. We seem to perceive in it the remarkable history of a single family, gradually gathering round itself the materials of a vast ambition, and shaping a people and a nation to support it, out of heterogeneous elements, by the informing power and spirit of one household and line. It is an advance of which the earlier steps were as slow and gradual as its subsequent strides suddenly became gigantic. It is a story of great patience and resolution; of an ambition which, unlike that of most barbarians, was not in a hurry, but could keep its object in view, and devise the means for its achievement, without restlessness and without weariness. It was content to work by

degrees, and without losing sight of the highest prizes, was satisfied with smaller ones, while they were proportionate to its strength. And among the institutions of which the foundations were early laid, as the permanent supports of the greatness which it meditated, one was at once the most original, the most terrible, and, for the time, the most effective that is to be found recorded among the inventions of deep craft and heartless love of power, of which history is full. The Ottomans found the art of borrowing their strength systematically, and from the very first, from the races they were subduing; of forcing into their own service, and moulding to their own purpose, the promise and energy which was their natural antagonist. Their history is one at first of few disasters, so cautious and so steadily provident, even while they were most enterprising, were these builders of a new empire. A reverse did come at length, unexpected and crushing. It retarded for some score of years their ambition; but it neither broke up their institutions, nor dismayed their spirit, nor turned aside their purposes, nor in the end crippled their power. It is a painful, but it is an instructive lesson, to compare their stout and persevering course, so wisely compliant to circumstances, but so inflexible in its ultimate direction, their imperious and exacting urgency in the opportunities of success, their self-restraint when it was the time to wait or pause, with the short-sightedness, the despair, the worn-out and spiritless imbecility, the random efforts, of those whom they were menacing. Thus, at length, Christianity was beaten down, the remains of ancient civilisation swept away, and

the seed and promise of that to come destroyed, not by a passing burst of barbarian ravage, but by a polity new and uncongenial to Europe, which had early attained its maturity and secured its permanence; religious in its groundwork of ideas and laws, with a religion bitterly hostile to all that is sacred in Europe; purely and fixedly military in its organisation and aims, as well as its spirit and habits. No glimmering of political life or thought, no dim image of civil rights or duties, ever gave hope, while the Ottomans were rising to greatness, that they would gradually open from the tastes and tempers of their ancestral deserts to the gentler manners, the wider thoughts, the nobler pursuits, the wiser and more equal laws, by which alone nations can be preserved from corruption and decay. There was no germ of improvement in their institutions, yet they succeeded in raising on those institutions a great and mighty monarchy, which, with all its inherent seeds of ruin, has already stood the wear of four centuries.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË

(1816-1855)

WUTHERING HEIGHTS

HEATHCLIFF, indeed, stands unredeemed; never once swerving in his arrow-straight course to perdition, from the time when "the little black-haired swarthy thing, as dark as if it came from the Devil," was first unrolled out of the bundle and set on its feet in the farm-house kitchen, to the hour when Nelly Dean found the grim, stalwart corpse laid on its back in the panel-enclosed bed, with wide-gazing eyes that seemed "to sneer at her attempt to close them, and parted lips and sharp white teeth that sneered too."

Whether it is right or advisable to create beings like Heathcliff, I do not know; I scarcely think it is. But this I know: the writer who possesses the creative gift owns something of which he is not always master — something that, at times, strangely wills and works for itself. He may lay down rules and devise principles, and to rules and principles it will perhaps for years lie in subjection; and then, haply without any warning of revolt, there comes a time when it will no longer consent to "harrow the valleys, or be bound with a band in

the furrow"—when it "laughs at the multitude of the city, and regards not the crying of the driver"—when, refusing absolutely to make ropes out of sea-sand any longer, it sets to work on statue-hewing and you have a Pluto or a Jove, a Tisiphone or a Psyche, a Mermaid or a Madonna, as Fate or Inspiration direct. Be the work grim or glorious, dread or divine, you have little choice left but quiescent adoption. As for you—the nominal artist—your share in it has been to work passively under dictates you neither delivered nor could question—that would not be uttered at your prayer, nor suppressed nor changed at your caprice. If the result be attractive, the World will praise you, who little deserve praise; if it be repulsive, the same World will blame you, who almost as little deserve blame.

"Wuthering Heights" was hewn in a wild workshop, with simple tools, out of homely materials. The statuary found a granite block on a solitary moor; gazing thereon, he saw how from the crag might be elicited a head, savage, swart, sinister; a form moulded with at least one element of grandeur—power. He wrought with a rude chisel, and from no model but the vision of his meditations. With time and labour, the crag took human shape; and there it stands colossal, dark, and frowning, half statue, half rock; in the former sense, terrible and goblin-like; in the latter, almost beautiful, for its colouring is of mellow grey, and moorland moss clothes it; and heath, with its blooming bells and balmy fragrance, grows faithfully close to the giant's foot.

FOREBODING

The sun passes the equinox ; the days shorten, the leaves grow sere ; but—he is coming.

Frosts appear at night ; November has sent his fogs in advance ; the wind takes its Autumn moan ; but—he is coming.

The skies hang full and dark—a rack sails from the west ; the clouds cast themselves into strange forms — arches and broad radiations ; there rise resplendent mornings — glorious, royal, purple as monarch in his state ; the heavens are one flame ; so wild are they, they rival battle at its thickest—so bloody, they shame Victory in her pride. I know some signs of the sky ; I have noted them ever since childhood. God, watch that sail ! O guard it !

The wind shifts to the west. Peace, peace, Banshee—keening at every window ! It will rise—it will swell—it shrieks out long ; wander as I may through the house this night, I cannot lull the blast. The advancing hours make it strong ; by midnight, all sleepless watchers hear and fear a wild south-west storm.

That storm roared frenzied for seven days. It did not cease till the Atlantic was strewn with wrecks ; it did not lull till the deeps had gorged their full of sustenance. Not till the destroying angel of tempest had achieved his perfect work, would he fold the wings whose waft was thunder—the tremor of whose plumes was storm.

Peace, be still ! O ! a thousand weepers, pray-

ing in agony on waiting shores, listened for that voice, but it was not uttered—not uttered till, when the hush came, some could not feel it; till, when the sun returned, his light was night to some!

CHARLES KINGSLEY

(1819-1875)

ENGLAND'S BREATHING-TIME

THE English were in those days an altogether dramatic people ; ready and able, as in Bideford that day, to extemporise a pageant, a masque, or any effort of the Thespian art short of the regular drama. For they were, in the first place, even down to the very poorest, a well-fed people, with fewer luxuries than we, but more abundant necessities ; and while beef, ale, and good woollen clothes could be obtained in plenty, without overworking either body or soul, men had time to amuse themselves in something more intellectual than mere toping in pot-houses. Moreover, the half century after the Reformation in England was one not merely of new intellectual freedom, but of immense animal good spirits. After years of dumb confusion and cruel persecution, a breathing time had come ; Mary and the fires of Smithfield had vanished together like a hideous dream, and the mighty shout of joy which greeted Elizabeth's entry into London, was the key-note of fifty glorious years ; the expression of a new-found strength and freedom, which vented itself at home

in drama and in song ; abroad in mighty conquests, achieved with the laughing recklessness of boys at play.

THE GRAY SISTERS

Perseus walked across the Ister dry-shod, and away through the moors and fens, day and night, toward the bleak north-west, turning neither to the right hand nor the left, till he came to the Unshapen Land, and the place which has no name.

And seven days he walked through it, on a path which few can tell ; for those who have trodden it like least to speak of it, and those who go there again in dreams are glad enough when they awake ; till he came to the edge of the everlasting night, where the air was full of feathers, and the soil was hard with ice ; and there at last he found the three Gray Sisters, by the shore of the freezing sea, nodding upon a white log of drift-wood, beneath the cold white winter moon ; and they chaunted a low song together, “ Why the old times were better than the new.”

GEORGE ELIOT

(1819-1880)

A LOCKED CHAMBER

THE blinds of this chamber were always down except once a quarter, when Martha entered that she might air and clean it. She always asked Mr. Gilfil for the key, which he kept locked up in his bureau, and returned it to him when she had finished her task.

It was a touching sight that the daylight streamed in upon, as Martha drew aside the blinds and thick curtains, and opened the Gothic casement of the oriel window! On the little dressing-table there was a dainty looking-glass in a carved and gilt frame; bits of wax-candle were still in the branched sockets at the sides, and on one of these branches hung a little black lace kerchief; a faded satin pincushion, with the pins rusted in it, a scent-bottle, and a large green fan, lay on the table; and on a dressing-box by the side of the glass was a work-basket and an unfinished baby-cap, yellow with age, lying in it. Two gowns, of a fashion long forgotten, were hanging on nails against the door, and a pair of tiny red slippers, with a bit of tarnished silver embroidery on them, were standing

at the foot of the bed. Two or three water-colour drawings, views of Naples, hung upon the walls; and over the mantelpiece, above some bits of rare old china, two miniatures in oval frames. One of these miniatures represented a young man about seven-and-twenty, with a sanguine complexion, full lips, and clear candid grey eyes. The other was the likeness of a girl probably not more than eighteen, with small features, thin cheeks, a pale southern-looking complexion, and large dark eyes. The gentleman wore powder; the lady had her dark hair gathered away from her face, and a little cap, with a cherry-coloured bow, set on the top of her head—a coquettish head-dress, but the eyes spoke of sadness rather than of coquetry.

Such were the things that Martha had dusted and let the air upon, four times a year, ever since she was a blooming lass of twenty; and she was now, in this last decade of Mr. Gilfil's life, unquestionably on the wrong side of fifty. Such was the locked-up chamber in Mr. Gilfil's house; a sort of visible symbol of the secret chamber in his heart, where he had long turned the key on early hopes and early sorrows, shutting up for ever all the passion and the poetry of his life.

SCARS

It is with men as with trees; if you lop off their finest branches into which they were pouring their young life-juice, the wounds will be healed over with some rough boss, some odd excrescence; and what might have been a grand tree expanding into liberal shade, is but a whimsical misshapen trunk.

Many an irritating fault, many an unlovely oddity, has come of a hard sorrow, which has crushed and maimed the nature just when it was expanding into plenteous beauty ; and the trivial erring life which we visit with our harsh blame, may be but as the unsteady motion of a man whose best limb is withered.

WOOD-ASHES

We poor mortals are often little better than wood-ashes—there is small sign of the sap, and the leafy freshness, and the bursting buds that were once there ; but wherever we see wood-ashes, we know that all that early fulness of life must have been. I, at least, hardly ever look at a bent old man, or a wizened old woman, but I see also, with my mind's eye, that Past of which they are the shrunken remnant, and the unfinished romance of rosy cheeks and bright eyes seems sometimes of feeble interest and significance, compared with that drama of hope and love which has long ago reached its catastrophe, and left the poor soul, like a dim and dusty stage, with all its sweet garden-scenes and fair perspectives overturned and thrust out of sight.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

(1822-1888)

GREEK TRAGEDY

FOR what reason was the Greek tragic poet confined to so limited a range of subjects? Because there are so few actions which unite in themselves in the highest degree, the conditions of excellence; and it was not thought that on any but an excellent subject could an excellent Poem be constructed. A few actions, therefore, eminently adapted for tragedy, maintained almost exclusive possession of the Greek tragic stage; their significance appeared inexhaustible; they were as permanent problems, perpetually offered to the genius of every fresh poet. This too is the reason of what appears to us moderns a certain baldness of expression in Greek tragedy; of the triviality with which we often reproach the remarks of the chorus, where it takes part in the dialogue; that the action itself, the situation of Orestes, or Merope, or Alcmæon, was to stand the central point of interest, unforgotten, absorbing, principal; that no accessories were for a moment to distract the spectator's attention from this; that the tone of the parts was to be perpetually kept down, in order not to impair the grandiose effect of the

whole. The terrible old mythic story on which the drama was founded stood, before he entered the theatre, traced in its bare outlines upon the spectator's mind ; it stood in his memory, as a group of statuary, faintly seen, at the end of a long and dark vista ; then came the Poet, embodying outlines, developing situations, not a word wasted, not a sentiment capriciously thrown in ; stroke upon stroke, the drama proceeded ; the light deepened upon the group ; more and more it revealed itself to the riveted gaze of the spectator ; until at last, when the final words were spoken, it stood before him in broad sunlight, a model of immortal beauty.

THE MATERIAL FOR GREAT LITERATURE

The present age makes great claims upon us ; we owe it service, it will not be satisfied without our admiration. I know not how it is, but their commerce with the ancients appears to me to produce, in those who constantly practise it, a steadying and composing effect upon their judgment, not of literary works only, but of men and events in general. They are like persons who have had a very weighty and impressive experience ; they are more truly than others under the empire of facts, and more independent of the language current among those with whom they live. They wish neither to applaud nor to revile their age ; they wish to know what it is, what it can give them, and whether this is what they want. What they want, they know very well ; they want

to educe and cultivate what is best and noblest in themselves; they know too, that this is no easy task—and they ask themselves sincerely whether their age and its literature can assist them in the attempt. If they are endeavouring to practise any art, they remember the plain and simple proceedings of the old artists, who attained their grand results by penetrating themselves with some noble and significant action, not by inflating themselves with a belief in the pre-eminent importance and greatness of their own times. They do not talk of their mission, nor of interpreting their age, nor of the coming Poet; all this, they know, is the mere delirium of vanity; their business is not to praise their age, but to afford to the men who live in it the highest pleasure which they are capable of feeling. If asked to afford this by means of subjects drawn from the age itself, they ask what special fitness the present age has for supplying them; they are told that it is an era of progress, an age commissioned to carry out the great ideas of industrial development and social amelioration. They reply that with all this they can do nothing; that the elements they need for the exercise of their art are great actions, calculated powerfully and delightfully to affect what is permanent in the human soul; that so far as the present age can supply such actions, they will gladly make use of them; but that an age wanting in moral grandeur can with difficulty supply such, and an age of spiritual discomfort can with difficulty be powerfully and delightfully affected by them.

A host of voices will indignantly rejoin that the present age is inferior to the past neither in moral grandeur nor in spiritual health. He who possesses the discipline I speak of will content himself with

remembering the judgments passed upon the present age in this respect by the two men, the one of strongest head, the other of widest culture, whom it has produced ; by Goethe and by Niebuhr. It will be sufficient for him that he knows the opinions held by these two great men respecting the present age and its literature ; and that he feels assured in his own mind that their aims and demands upon life were such as he would wish, at any rate, his own to be ; and their judgment as to what is impeding and disabling such as he may safely follow. He will not, however, maintain a hostile attitude towards the false pretensions of his age ; he will content himself with not being overwhelmed by them. He will esteem himself fortunate if he can succeed in banishing from his mind all feelings of contradiction, and irritation, and impatience ; in order to delight himself with the contemplation of some noble action of a heroic time, and to enable others, through his representation of it, to delight in it also.

THE SANITY OF THE CLASSICS

It has been said that I wish to limit the Poet in his choice of subjects to the period of Greek and Roman antiquity ; but it is not so ; I only counsel him to choose for his subjects great actions, without regarding to what time they belong. Nor do I deny that the poetic faculty can and does manifest itself in treating the most trifling action, the most hopeless subject. But it is a pity that power should be wasted ; and that the Poet should be compelled to impart interest and force to his subject,

instead of receiving them from it, and thereby doubling his impressiveness. There is, it has been excellently said, an immortal strength in the stories of great actions ; the most gifted poet, then, may well be glad to supplement with it that mortal weakness, which, in presence of the vast spectacle of life and the world, he must for ever feel to be his individual portion.

Again, with respect to the study of the classical writers of antiquity : it has been said that we should emulate rather than imitate them. I make no objection ; all I say is, let us study them. They can help to cure us of what is, it seems to me, the great vice of our intellect, manifesting itself in our incredible vagaries in literature, in art, in religion, in morals ; namely, that it is *fantastic*, and wants *sanity*. Sanity—that is the great virtue of the ancient literature : the want of that is the great defect of the modern, in spite of all its variety and power. It is impossible to read carefully the great ancients, without losing something of our caprice and eccentricity ; and to emulate them we must at least read them.

PRINTED BY
MORRISON AND GIBB LIMITED,
EDINBURGH

A PROSPECTUS
OF
THE LITTLE LIBRARY

I PROTEST that I am devoted to no school in particular: I condemn no school, I reject none. I am for the school of all the great men. I care for Wordsworth as well as for Byron, for Burns as well as Shelley, for Boccaccio as well as for Milton, for Bunyan as well as Rabelais, for Cervantes as much as for Dante, for Corneille as well as for Shakespeare, for Goldsmith as well as Goethe. I stand by the sentence of the world.

FREDERIC HARRISON

METHUEN & CO.
36 Essex Street, W.C.

THE LITTLE LIBRARY

Pott 8vo. Each Vol, cloth, 1s. 6d. net; leather, 2s 6d. net

MESSRS METHUEN intend to produce a series of small books under the above title, containing some of the famous works in English and other literatures, in the domains of fiction, poetry, and belles lettres. The series will also contain several volumes of selections in prose and verse.

The books will be edited with the most sympathetic and scholarly care. Each one, where it seems desirable, will contain an introduction which will give (1) a short biography of the author, (2) a critical estimate of the book. Where they are necessary, short notes will be added at the foot of the page.

The Little Library will ultimately contain complete sets of the novels of W. M. Thackeray, Jane Austen, the sisters Brontë, Mrs Gaskell, and others. It will also contain the best work of many other novelists whose names are household words.

Each volume will have a photogravure frontispiece, and the books will be produced with great care in a style uniform with that of The Library of Devotion.

On the opposite page is printed a first list of books, and many others are in preparation.

The First Volumes will be—

- Vanity Fair. By W. M. THACKERAY. Edited by Stephen Gwynn. *Three Volumes.*
- Pendennis. By W. M. THACKERAY. Edited by Stephen Gwynn. *Three Volumes.*
- Pride and Prejudice. By JANE AUSTEN. Edited by E. V. Lucas. *Two Volumes.*
- Cranford. By MRS GASKELL. Edited by E. V. Lucas.
- John Halifax, Gentleman. By MRS CRAIK. Edited by Annie Matheson. *Two Volumes.*
- Lavengro. By GEORGE BORROW. Edited by F. H. Groome. *Two Volumes.*
- Eothen. By A. W. KINGLAKE. Edited by D.
- A Little Book of English Lyrics.
- A Little Book of Scottish Verse. Edited by T. F. Henderson.
- The Inferno of Dante. Translated by H. F. CARY. With an Introduction and Notes by Paget Toynbee.
- The Early Poems of Alfred, Lord Tennyson. Edited by J. Churton Collins, M.A.
- The Princess, and other Poems. By ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON. Edited by Elizabeth Wordsworth.
- Maud, and other Poems. By ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON. Edited by Elizabeth Wordsworth.
- In Memoriam. By ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON. Edited by H. C. Beeching.
- Selected Poems of William Blake. Edited by Mark Perugini.

Sedley, but she swallowed her mortification as well as she had the abominable curry before it, and as soon as she could speak, said, with a comical, good-humoured air—

“I ought to have remembered the pepper which the Princess of Persia puts in the cream-tarts in the *Arabian Nights*. Do you put cayenne into your cream-tarts in India, sir?”

Old Sedley began to laugh, and thought Rebecca was a good-humoured girl. Joseph simply said—“Cream-tarts, Miss? Our cream is very bad in Bengal. We generally use goat’s milk; and, ’gad, do you know, I’ve got to prefer it!”

“You won’t like *everything* from India now, Miss Sharp,” said the old gentleman; but when the ladies had retired after dinner, the wily old fellow said to his son, “Have a care, Joe; that girl is setting her cap at you.”

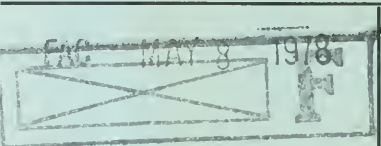
“Pooh! nonsense!” said Joe, highly flattered. “I recollect, sir, there was a girl at Dumdum, a daughter of Cutler of the Artillery, and afterwards married to Lance, the surgeon, who made a dead set at me in the year ’4—at me and Mulligatawney, whom I mentioned to you before dinner—a devilish good fellow Mulligatawney—he’s a magistrate at Budgebudge, and sure to be in council in five years. Well, sir, the Artillery gave a ball, and Quintin, of the King’s 14th, said to me, ‘Sedley,’ said he, ‘I bet you thirteen to ten that Sophy Cutler hooks either you or Mulligatawney before the rains.’ ‘Done,’ says I; and egad, sir—this claret’s very good. Adamson’s or Carbonell’s? . . .”

A slight snore was the only reply: the honest stockbroker was asleep, and so the rest of Joseph’s

PR
1285
B327

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Santa Barbara

THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DAY
STAMPED BELOW.





3 1205 00030 1745

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA

001 372 267

3

